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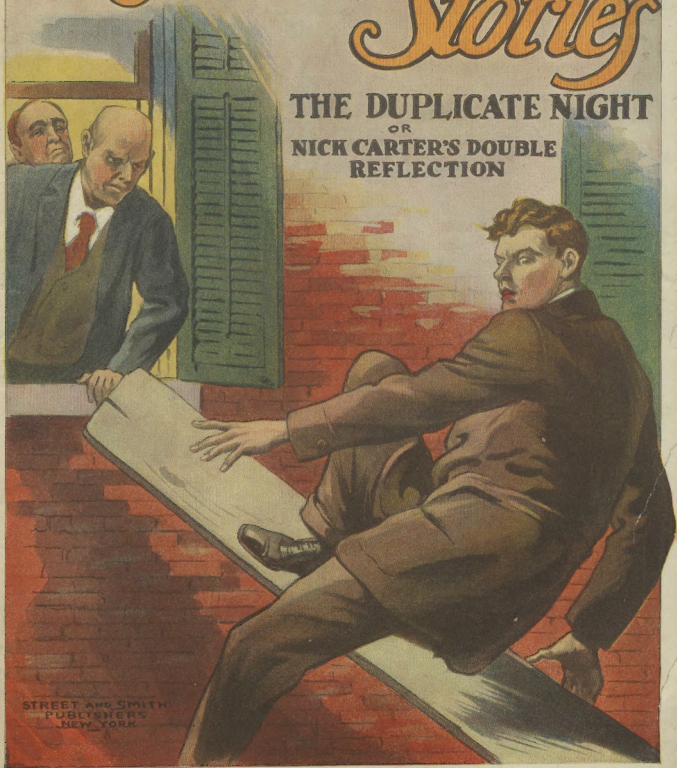
Nick Carter Stories

THE DUPLICATE NIGHT
OR
NICK CARTER'S DOUBLE REFLECTION



STREET AND SMITH PUBLISHERS NEW YORK

MAY 21 1915 ©CLB334316

NICK CARTER STORIES

Issued Weekly. Entered as Second-class Matter at the New York Post Office, by STREET & SMITH, 79-89 *Seventh Ave., New York.*

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No. 141. NEW YORK, May 22, 1915. Price Five Cents.

THE DUPLICATE NIGHT;

Or, NICK CARTER'S DOUBLE REFLECTION.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

THE DUPLICATE NIGHT.

It was a fateful moment—one to be remembered.

A fateful moment in the lives and fortunes of some to whom there then came no premonition of evil, no dread of the terrible sword that hung by a hair above their heads, upon whom was cast no shadow through the glare and glitter around them, amid the gay festivities in which each played a part.

It was a fateful moment, one brought only by chance to the notice of Nick Carter.

It was remembered by the celebrated detective, moreover, only because of two incidents that would have been entirely unnoticed by a less keen and discerning man.

One was the single stroke of a tall, old-fashioned clock in the main hall of the great mansion.

It struck the half after ten.

The hall in which it struck, and in which Nick Carter then was standing, was that of the magnificent Carrington mansion on Washington Heights, the home of the wealthy railway magnate, Horace K. Carrington, a millionaire fifty times over, and prominent with his handsome wife in the most fashionable and exclusive circles of New York society.

It was the night of the fifteenth of January, memorable for an unusual warm spell of more than a week, which had melted the last vestige of snow and drawn the last sign of frost from the ground.

It was also memorable as the night of a private masked ball in the Carrington mansion, in which something like three hundred of their most intimate friends had gathered.

The avenue and streets adjoining the extensive estate were thronged with conveyances of the most expensive kinds, limousines, and costly motor cars predominating.

The elegant grounds, covering nearly an entire square, were almost as bright as day under the glare of a myriad of electric lights suspended among the trees of the surrounding park.

The superb mansion itself was ablaze from basement to roof. Its broad halls and spacious, sumptuously furnished rooms were thronged with masked guests, many in elaborate fancy and historic costumes, and some in nondescript attire.

Courtiers and princes rubbed elbows with clowns and jesters. Queens in regal raiment hobnobbed in corners and alcoves with country bumpkins, while the whirl of the dance presented a kaleidoscopic picture, the details of which would require a volume. It was a weird, yet dazzling picture, with the gleam and glitter of jewels of inestimable worth.

Aside from the numerous officers and guardians in and about the extensive grounds, guardians of diamonds and gems that would have aggregated millions, two men in evening dress and of refined and unofficial bearing mingled with the servants and other house functionaries in various parts of the mansion, apparently having only an eye to the general conduct of affairs.

These two men were Nick Carter and his chief assistant, Chick Carter, both carefully disguised, the balmasque feature of the gathering and the unusual opportunity for knavery that it presented, in view of costly jewels worn by his guests, having led their host to secretly employ the two famous detectives as safeguards against designing intruders and possible crime.

At precisely half past ten, the fateful moment mentioned, Nick Carter was standing in the main hall and near the front door of the house. He could see the entire length of the hall, the broad stairway to the second floor, and through several open doors the throng of dancers in the adjoining rooms. All of them still wore masks, eleven o'clock having been the hour stipulated for their removal.

Mingled with the strains of orchestral music the single stroke of the clock reached the detective's ear. There was no mistaking the sweet and mellow resonance of its bell.

At the same moment a woman, threading her way between numerous other persons in the hall caught the detective's eye.

She was one of the guests, and her costume spoke for itself. She was clad completely in black, from her dainty ties to the mask that hid her face and the veil that partly concealed her hair and fell in picturesque folds over her shapely neck and shoulders. But this ebon costume was bespangled with countless glittering stars and radiant diamonds.

Plainly enough, she was a personification of—Night.

Nick thought it a striking costume, one that set off to advantage the fine, graceful form of the woman. He watched her furtively while she came through the hall and went up the stairs to the second floor. He could see the gleam and glitter of her eyes, but no other feature of her face, yet he felt sure she was comparatively young and beautiful.

"She appears to be a bit nervous and in a hurry," he said to himself, while she mounted the stairs. "She may be seeking some one, or possibly has lost her partner for this dance. That would irritate most young women."

Nick turned upon hearing the voice of his chief assistant. Chick had just entered through the open front door and paused at Nick's elbow.

"A penny for your thoughts," he said quietly.

"They are not worth it," Nick dryly answered. "I was thinking of a woman who just went upstairs. She is clad all in black and sprinkled with stars. She evidently represents Night, and I——"

"There she is, now," said Chick, with a glance toward the rear part of the hall.

Nick gazed in that direction.

"By Jove, that's quite remarkable," he muttered audibly. "It is a striking costume, Nick, for fair."

"I don't mean the costume."

"No? What do you mean?"

"That two women have costumes precisely alike," said Nick. "This one appears to be an exact duplicate of the other. She is, so to speak, a duplicate Night."

"She probably is the same one," said Chick.

"Impossible!"

"Why so?"

"The other just went upstairs. She cannot be in two places at once."

"She may have come down. There is a side stairway."

"She would not have had time when you called my attention to her. She had only disappeared at the head of these stairs."

"There can be only one explanation," said Chick. "There are two women wearing similar costumes. There evidently is, as you put it, a duplicate Night."

Nick had been watching this second woman while they were talking, and his brows had knit perceptibly.

"She appears a bit nervous and in a hurry, like the other," he muttered, after the masked woman had gazed into two of the rooms in which the dance was in progress. "She evidently is searching for some one."

"Some one she knows, then, or with whom she came here," said Chick. "She could not identify any one else, unless informed of the wearer's costume."

"True."

"She appears to be——"

"Wait!" Nick interrupted. "Ah, she has found him. He was dancing in the rear parlor."

The music had ceased and the dance ended.

A man in the costume of a Mexican toreador had just emerged from the room mentioned.

The woman in starry black hastened to approach and speak to him.

He bowed and listened to her, while she slipped one hand around his arm and strove to draw him away. He hesitated for a few seconds, then bowed again and accompanied her.

They disappeared into a diverging hall, one leading to a side door of the palatial residence.

"We'll go out this way," Nick muttered, turning toward the front door.

"Out after them?" questioned Chick, a bit surprised.

"Yes. I'm something more than curious. I want to know where they are going."

"After a breath of fresh air, most likely, and one cannot blame them," said Chick. "It's like a melting pot indoors."

"No hotter than that melting pot from which we saved the Waldmere plate a few months ago," Nick replied, as they picked their way out through the throng and descended the front steps.

"That's right, too."

"This is an ice box, Chick, compared with that room in which we rounded up Stuart Floyd and his gang when engaged in that infernal work. It's a pity that that rascal gave the prison-hospital guardians the slip and is again at large. The community would be more safe if your bullet had killed him, instead of only wounding him. He was a bad egg and is likely to break out again."

"Quite likely," Chick admitted. "But his escape was no fault of ours."

"That's very true, but it's no less deplorable."

"Are the Waldmeres here to-night?"

"I don't know. I imagine they are, however, for they are friends of the Carringtons, and travel with the swell set. Ah, there they go," Nick abruptly digressed, upon turning a front corner of the great house.

It brought a side driveway, the porte-cochère, and the side door into view, also the grounds south of the house and the side and rear streets, then brightly lighted and in which numerous motor cars and carriages were waiting.

The couple in whose movements Nick Carter had become interested had left the house and were walking quite briskly toward a broad driveway gate in the rear, one entered from the back street and leading to the garage and stable. Both of these were brightly lighted, also, and contained many waiting conveyances, with their liveried chauffeurs, drivers, and footmen.

The Spanish cavalier and woman in starry black paid no attention to others, however, nor appeared to have any occasion for secrecy. They still wore their masks, nevertheless, and they walked briskly out through the rear gate and entered a limousine waiting near by.

The door was closed with a bang and the chauffeur drove quickly away, so quickly that Nick was unable

to get a glimpse of his face, or to learn the number of the car.

"They evidently are going home," Chick remarked, while they paused in the driveway some thirty feet from the gate, which was as near as they had come to overtaking the couple. "The woman may be ill, or overcome with the heat in the house."

Nick shook his head.

"Nothing of the kind," he replied. "She walked too briskly for one in that condition."

"There is something in that," Chick allowed.

"Furthermore, if they are going home, why did they wear their masks after leaving the house? They either are coming back, or there is something under the surface."

"A secret love affair, perhaps," suggested Chick. "They may have stolen out for a brief flirtation, intending to return before the festivities end. I don't see, Nick, as it's anything for us to butt into."

"Not at present, Chick, at all events," Nick replied. "We'll return to the house."

They did so without further comment upon the circumstances, and they separated again after rejoining the throng in the house.

Nearly two hours later, or considerably after midnight, Nick Carter felt a hand on his arm and heard the subdued voice of Mr. Horace Carrington, the host, a portly man in the fifties, then wearing an elaborate courtier's costume.

"I want you for a few moments, Carter," he said quietly. "Come with me."

"Anything wrong?" questioned Nick, noting his gravity.

"I fear so," said Carrington. "A lady, one of my guests, wants to talk with you. She is waiting in my private library. This way."

Nick followed him with further questions and entered the room, where the lady at once arose to meet him.

She was a woman in starry black—the duplicate Night.

She no longer wore a mask, however, and Nick found himself face to face with an old acquaintance, one for whom he already had done double service. She was none other than the whilom beautiful chorus girl for love of whom Lord Archie Waldmere had sacrificed his heritage and English birthrights and become estranged from home and family—now Lady Mollie Waldmere.

"Good gracious!" Nick quietly exclaimed. "Is it you, Mrs. Waldmere? What has happened?"

She extended a trembling hand and gazed at him with apprehensive and glistening eyes.

"I don't know," she replied. "I cannot even imagine. I have told Mr. Carrington, and he said you were here incognito and in disguise, so I asked him to call you. I have not forgotten what you have done for Archie and me, Mr. Carter."

"Don't mention that, Mrs. Waldmere," said Nick. "What now is the trouble?"

"I don't know," Mollie tremulously repeated. "I only know that I—I cannot find my husband."

CHAPTER II.

A DEEPENING MYSTERY.

Nick Carter was much less surprised, of course, upon learning of the mysterious disappearance of Archie Waldmere, than he would have been if he had not seen the episodes that had occurred about half past ten, and the remarkable duplication of the costume described.

Naturally, too, several pertinent questions at once arose in Nick's mind.

Who was the other woman—the duplicate Night?

Was Waldmere the masked man who had accompanied her from the house and departed in a limousine?

Did he, in that case, know with whom he was going, or did he suppose he was departing with his wife?

If not, and he went willingly with another, what motive had he in so doing?

Was he guilty of a secret love affair, as Chick had suggested, and had he gone to indulge in a clandestine flirtation, intending to return within a reasonable time, only to be inadvertently detained until this late hour?

Nick was not inclined to believe anything of that kind, as a matter of fact. He had a very high opinion of the titled young Englishman, who had been loyal enough to his love for a beautiful chorus girl to make her his wife, in spite of the opposition of his choleric old father, the Earl of Eggleston, and the consequent estrangement from home and family and native land, he having for the two years since his marriage been engaged in Western mining projects, occupying a fine residence in Riverside Drive.

In view of all of these facts, of which Nick was thoroughly informed, he did not believe that Waldmere was guilty of a clandestine love affair. He decided that he would not immediately disclose what he had seen, however, and that he first would look into the matter superficially and make sure he was right on certain points.

For Nick did not know positively, of course, that it was Mollie Waldmere whom he had seen ascending the front stairs at precisely half past ten. There was a possibility of its having been the other—the unknown personification of Night.

"It really is extraordinary, most extraordinary," Mr. Carrington remarked, when the detective did not reply for a moment to the anxious woman. "I cannot account for it."

"I don't think there is any cause for alarm," said Nick. "Have you made sure, Mrs. Waldmere, that your husband is not in the house?"

"Dear me, yes!" exclaimed Mollie, gazing at him. "I have searched everywhere in the crowd. It is nearly two hours since we unmasked. Archie was to have gone in with me for refreshments, but I have waited and searched in vain. I know, Mr. Carter, that something has happened to him. He would never desert me in this way. Besides, he did a most extraordinary thing earlier in the evening."

"What was that?" Nick inquired. "Sit down, Mrs. Waldmere, and tell me. I will look into the matter."

Mr. Carrington had closed the door of his private library, and all three then sat down to continue the discussion.

"He sent me a note about half past ten, Mr. Carter, asking me to join him in the west-front chamber, and saying that he wanted me. Here it is, merely these penciled lines on a scrap of paper. I thrust it into my waist, not wanting to drop it on the floor.

Nick read the fragment of paper she hurriedly produced. It contained only these lines:

"Come up to the west-front chamber, Mollie. I want you. ARCHIE."

Nick returned the paper to her, remarking:

"I infer that you did not find Archie in the west-front chamber."

"No, I did not," said Mollie nervously. "I could not imagine why he wanted me. I hunted vainly for him on the second floor. I have not seen him since, Mr. Carter."

"Examine the writing, Mrs. Waldmere," said Nick. "Does it look like Archie's hand?"

"Why, no, not exactly," she replied, after a brief scrutiny. "I really don't believe that it is his. But I did not notice it, Mr. Carter, at the time. I felt a bit nervous and hastened upstairs to find him."

Nick remembered having observed it, and he now had positively fixed the identity of the woman seen on the stairs. He took the note from her again and asked:

"Was this brought to you by one of the servants?"

"No, it was not."

"By whom?"

"It was slipped into my hand by a man clad in a Mexican costume. I was surprised, of course, but I opened and read it. The man then had disappeared. I wondered how he had identified me, of course, but I supposed that Archie had told him what costume I was wearing. That made me nervous, you see, for I feared he might be ill. I could think of no other reason for his wanting me."

"When had you previously seen him?"

"Not for half an hour, Mr. Carter, or longer."

Nick took the note from her again, saying, while he slipped it into his pocket:

"I will keep this for a time, Mrs. Waldmere, if you have no objection."

"None whatever."

"Tell me, now, what costume your husband wore."

"That of a Spanish cavalier."

"Did he have it made, or rent from a co-tumer?"

"He hired it from Perrot, in Fifth Avenue."

"And yours?"

"Came from the same place. Some of the jewels have been added, and will be removed before I return it," said Mollie, pointing to some of the ornaments.

Nick gazed thoughtfully at the floor for a moment, then turned to Mr. Carrington.

"Your guests were admitted by card, I believe?" he said inquiringly.

"Yes. Each presented an invitation card to Perkins, the butler, with the bearer's name and that of the costume worn."

"Who now has the cards?"

"Perkins has charge of them."

"Have him bring them here," Nick directed. "I wish to examine them."

Mr. Carrington withdrew to find the butler.

"When did you decide to wear this costume, Mrs. Waldmere?" Nick then asked, turning to her again.

"Oh, nearly a week ago," said Mollie. "I engaged it of Perrot about that time."

"Who except him knew you were to wear it? Did you inform any person?"

"Only one, aside from my husband and the servants, who may have heard me discussing it with him," said Mollie. "I told one intimate friend of mine, Clara Ringold, of Brooklyn. She and her husband were invited and intended coming, but I have not seen either of them. Something must have prevented them."

"What costume was she to wear?"

"That of a cabaret singer. She has a beautiful voice. We confided in one another, Mr. Carter, that we might recognize each other during the evening."

"Where were you at that time?"

"When we confided in one another?"

"Yes."

"I was calling on Mrs. Ringold in her Brooklyn residence. That was several days ago."

"Were you alone with her?"

"Yes. We were seated in the library."

"She is the wife of the Honorable Charles Ringold, I take it, who was a member of the last Congress."

"Yes, the same," bowed Mrs. Waldmere. "She——"

"One moment, please," Nick interposed.

Mr. Carrington had returned, bringing a pasteboard box containing the invitation cards received by the butler at the front door, and presumably bearing the name of every guest who had entered the house.

Nick at once began a rapid inspection of them, his companions watching him with mute interest, and he was not long in finding what he sought. He discovered first the two cards presented by the missing man and his wife:

"Mr. Archie Waldmere, Spanish Cavalier. Mrs. Archie Waldmere, Night."

The names of the costumes had been written on the cards by Waldmere himself, and his wife readily identified them.

A few moments later Nick produced two others, and he then placed the box on the table.

"Here are two of more importance," he remarked, showing them to Carrington and Mollie.

They bore the following names:

"Mr. Charles Ringold, Mexican Toreador. Mrs. Clara Ringold, Cabaret Singer."

"The names of the costumes evidently were written by the same person, for the hands are identical," Nick observed, while his companions examined them.

"But this is very strange," said Mr. Carrington, with a look of perplexity. "I have not seen Ringold nor his wife since the unmasking. I supposed they were not here."

"I am very sure they have not been here, Mr. Carrington," said Mollie confidently.

"But these admission cards—how came they here, in that case?" Carrington demanded. "Perkins certainly received them at the door."

"The arriving guests were not required to unmask for Perkins, were they?" Nick inquired.

"No, certainly not. He had a list of the invited guests, and checked off each arrival."

"The explanation is a simple one," said Nick. "Two strangers got by Perkins by using these two cards."

"But Ringold would not have given his cards to others. He is above such discourtesy as that," Carrington warmly protested.

"Undoubtedly," Nick agreed. "It is safe to assume, then, that the cards were obtained from him by covert means, also that a subterfuge of some kind was employed to prevent him and his wife from coming here to-night, or even communicating with you."

"But that smacks of knavery, Mr. Carter, if not crime itself," said Mr. Carrington apprehensively.

"I now am sure of knavery of some kind," Nick replied. "Whether it is so serious as to come under the head of crime remains to be learned."

"Dear me, this is shocking."

"I now will tell you what I saw about half past ten this evening," Nick added. "I want you to say nothing about it, pending my further investigations."

Both of his companions pledged themselves to secrecy, and Nick then briefly told them of his earlier observations, much to the amazement of Mr. Carrington and the increasing anxiety of Mollie Waldmere.

"Don't let my disclosures add to your alarm," said Nick, observing her paleness. "The circumstances admit of only one interpretation."

"What is your opinion?" Mollie questioned.

"Though he departed voluntarily, your husband did not go intentionally with another woman," Nick explained. "He was lured away by her, thinking her to be you, Mrs. Waldmere, and detecting no difference in the two costumes. You were likewise lured to the second floor of the house by the forged note given to you, in order to preclude your seeing and preventing the subterfuge that deceived your husband."

"That undoubtedly explains it, Nick," said Mr. Carrington.

"And all this was evidently accomplished by two persons who, in some way, obtained the invitation cards of Mr. and Mrs. Ringold, and also prevented their coming here to-night."

"Oh, my! this is terrible," said Mollie, with lips quivering. "I cannot help feeling alarmed, Mr. Carter."

"I will take the case and sift it to the bottom," Nick assured her. "You suspect no person, of course, of having designs upon Mr. Waldmere?"

"No, indeed!"

"Nor know of any reason for such?"

"I have not the slightest suspicion."

"I see you have a telephone here," said Nick, with a glance at Mr. Carrington. "Let me try to get the Ringolds and see what I can learn."

"Do so, Carter, by all means."

"I am sure they have a telephone," said Mollie. "I frequently talk with Clara."

Nick looked up the number, but he tried in vain for several minutes to get a response. All he could obtain was that of the exchange operator:

"They do not answer."

"There must be a reason for this," said Nick, replacing the receiver. "They ought to hear the repeated ringing of a telephone bell, even if they are abed."

"What's to be done?" asked Mollie anxiously. "I am trying to be calm, Mr. Carter, but I am frightfully disturbed."

Nick came to an abrupt determination.

"I will go to Brooklyn and see what can be learned," he replied. "In the meantime, Mrs. Waldmere, you must go home and wait until you hear from me."

"When will that be?"

"I will telephone to you as soon as I return from Brooklyn. I then shall go to my residence, from which I will ring you up. Chick will remain here, Mr. Carrington, until your guests have departed. I think there will be nothing more wrong."

"This is bad enough, Carter, Heaven knows," was the grave reply.

"Oh, it may not prove as serious as you apprehend, not serious at all, perhaps," Nick said lightly, though chiefly to encourage the woman.

"Well, well, I hope not."

"Do nothing more about it, nor say anything to others," Nick repeated. "Leave the matter entirely to me. I will do all that can be done with the case, and will lose no time in doing it."

Mollie Waldmere thanked him feelingly, then went to make her preparations for returning home.

Mr. Carrington detained the detective for a moment, asking gravely:

"Tell me frankly, Carter, what do you think of this? Do not deceive me."

"Frankly, then, Mr. Carrington, it looks bad, quite bad," said Nick. "Knaves do not take such risks, nor go to so much trouble, unless with some strong incentive. I cannot conjecture what lies back of it, of course, but I am going to find out."

"Will you communicate with me later?"

"Surely by to-morrow morning. Keep quiet in the meantime and leave me to do the rest."

Nick remained only to talk briefly with Chick, telling him what he had learned, and he then departed hurriedly, heading for home in a taxicab.

CHAPTER III.

NICK CONFIRMS HIS THEORY.

Nick Carter stopped at his Madison Avenue residence on his way to Brooklyn only to pick up his junior assistant, Patsy Garvan, whom he aroused from bed and with whom he soon was seated in the waiting taxicab.

"I thought I might need you," Nick remarked, as they sped away. "There's no telling what we may learn, and it's always well to be on the safe side."

"Sure thing, chief," Patsy readily agreed. "But what's up?"

Nick then told him what had occurred in the Carrington mansion, carefully covering all of the essential points, as was his custom when discussing a case with any of his assistants.

"Gee whiz! it don't look good to me," said Patsy, after listening attentively. "Some one has it in for Waldmere good and strong, chief, or such chances would not have been taken."

"That is what I told Mr. Carrington," Nick nodded.

"But why did they take that way to get him?" Patsy doubtfully questioned. "They could have nailed him much more easily by——"

"But it is not easy to get away with a man like Waldmere," Nick interrupted. "He is interested almost solely in his home, his business, and his social enjoyments. Any covert attempt to lure him from either would at once be regarded with suspicion. Besides, there may be much more to this affair than appears on the surface."

"Have you any suspicions?"

"None whatever, Patsy, at present," said Nick. "We must dig up evidence that will supply us with a definite clew. I think the Ringolds may be able to aid us."

"Are you acquainted with them?"

"With Mr. Ringold, but not with his wife," said Nick. "We will ring them up, however, in spite of the hour."

It was two o'clock when they sprang from the taxicab in front of the fine Ringold residence in a fashionable quarter of Brooklyn. With Patsy following, Nick hastened up the walk leading to the house and rang the bell.

The summons brought a response from one of the front windows on the second floor. It was hurriedly opened and the head and shoulders of Mr. Ringold himself appeared.

"Who's there?" he called, gazing down.

"Nick Carter," replied the detective. "Slip on your bath robe, Ringold, and come down to the door. I want to talk with you."

"Great Scott!" Mr. Ringold exclaimed audibly. "You here, Nick, at this hour? What's wrong?"

"Come down and admit me. I then will tell you."

"I'll be with you in half a minute."

Little more than that had elapsed when Mr. Ringold opened the door and admitted the detectives, conducting them in to the library, and switching on the light.

"Now, Nick, what's it all about?" he inquired, gazing curiously at him.

"It's about the Carrington ball," Nick replied. "How happened it that you and your wife did not go?"

"For only one reason," said Mr. Ringold. "It had been postponed, Nick, because of the sudden illness of Mr. Carrington."

"That so?" queried Nick, smiling. "Who informed you?"

"A messenger sent out by Mrs. Carrington. He came in a limousine this afternoon. He stated that Carrington was ill, that the ball had necessarily been postponed, and that the invitation and admission cards had been recalled and would be reissued later."

"Did you see the messenger?"

"No. I had not returned home from my office."

"Who saw him?"

"My wife talked with him. She gave him the cards of our invitation. He said that he and the Carrington butler had been sent to collect them from all who had been invited."

"Mrs. Ringold suspected nothing wrong?"

"Why should she?"

"Nor you, when she informed you?"

"Certainly not. The messenger told a plausible story. He appeared trustworthy, or my wife would have detected it. Is there something wrong, then, that you have called here?" Mr. Ringold demanded, a bit impatiently.

Nick then told him the circumstances, or in so far as served his purpose, while his hearer gazed amazedly and with manifest regret.

"By Jove, this is most astonishing, Carter," he then said gravely. "Who would have thought of such an imposition? I care less for having been cheated out of a fine evening's enjoyment, than that our invitation cards have been turned to such a despicable use. I will ask my wife to join us, if you wish to question her."

"You may, Ringold, if you have no objection," said Nick. "I want a description of the messenger, also any other information that your wife can give me."

"I will speak to her."

"Gee, it looks like a neatly framed-up job, chief, for fair," said Patsy, while they waited.

"Decidedly so," Nick agreed. "See whether that telephone is in working order."

He glanced at one on the library table and Patsy hastened to obey, presently reporting that he could get no communication from the local exchange.

"The instrument has been put out of commission," said Nick.

"That's about the size of it," nodded Patsy.

"It was done to prevent the Ringolds from calling up Mrs. Carrington to inquire concerning her husband's alleged illness, or to verify the postponement, in case of any suspicion."

"Right again, chief, for a hundred."

"It's ten to one that the wires have been cut outside where they enter the house," Nick added. "We'll have a look at them presently."

Mr. Ringold returned with his wife at that moment and Nick resumed his inquiries. The woman could add but little, however, to what her husband already had stated. She described the messenger as a dark man of medium build, wearing a livery and accompanied by a chauffeur, who remained in the limousine while the other performed his supposedly genuine mission.

"At what time did he call, Mrs. Ringold?" Nick inquired.

"I think it was shortly after five o'clock," she replied.

"It then was dark out-of-doors?"

"Yes, indeed. It had been dark for some little time."

"It did not occur to you to telephone to Mrs. Carrington, I infer, to inquire concerning her husband, or to express your sympathy," said Nick.

"Well, I think quite likely I should have done so," Mrs. Ringold replied; "but I first undertook to call up my friend, Mrs. Waldmere, and I found that the telephone was out of order. That precluded both communications."

"And you suspected nothing wrong?"

"No, nothing whatever. I did not dream of such an imposition as my husband has just mentioned."

Nick did not add to his inquiries. He directed both to say nothing about the matter, and after a word of regret for having disturbed them, he withdrew from the house with his assistant.

"Now, Patsy, we'll have a look at those wires," he said quietly, after Ringold had closed the front door.

"I'm with you, chief," Patsy nodded.

They had no difficulty in finding where the wires entered the house, a point near one of the library windows. As Nick had predicted, moreover, they were found to be neatly cut and the instrument temporarily rendered useless.

"Here are tracks of the rascal's boots," he remarked, pointing to some imprints in the damp earth. "He stole in here after getting the invitation cards and cut the wires."

"Surest thing you know," said Patsy.

"That is why he waited until after dark before calling here," Nick added. "He then could turn the trick without being seen. Come, we'll go home. We can accomplish no more until to-morrow."

"But what can we then accomplish?" questioned Patsy. "We seem to have no clew to the identity of the rascals, nor any thread worth following up."

"I'm not so sure of that," Nick replied. "We'll consider it later."

It was three o'clock when they arrived home, and they found Chick waiting for them in the library, with a cigar in his mouth and his heels elevated to the edge of the table.

"Well, we don't get much beauty sleep to-night," he remarked, with a laugh, when Nick and Patsy entered.

"You don't need any," said Patsy dryly.

"So my mirror tells me," replied Chick, laughing again. "What more have you learned, Nick?"

Nick informed him of the results of his hurried visit to Brooklyn.

"By Jove, it's a curious case," Chick then declared. "The job certainly was well planned and very neatly executed. But what's the big idea? Who is out after Waldmere? With what object, Nick, and who are the culprits?"

"Those are questions more easily asked than answered," said Nick. "It is hard to say why Waldmere has been abducted."

"You think, then, that he has been abducted?"

"The circumstances point strongly to that. Waldmere is not a man to be mixed in a mess with another woman."

"That's true," Chick agreed. "The motive may have been revenge. Stuart Floyd is at large, you know, and he may have had it in for Waldmere because of those former cases, and for having put us on his track. He is capable of any kind of a knavish job."

"There is nothing in speculations," said Nick. "I'll think it over in bed and we'll discuss it in the morning."

"That's good judgment, in view of the hour," Chick vouchsafed, rising. "There is a bare possibility, too, that Waldmere will have returned by that time."

Nick did not reply to this, nor was it verified the following morning.

Ten o'clock found all three seated in the detective's business office. Nick had been in communication with Mrs. Waldmere, also with Mr. Carrington, but only with negative results. The situation stood precisely where it had stood the previous night.

Nick Carter's mind had been active in the meantime, however, and he had decided what steps must be taken.

"The motive for this crime is beyond conjecture," said he, in reply to a question from Chick. "It can be learned only when we have identified Waldmere's abductors, discovered what relations have existed between them, and unearthed additional evidence in the case. That is what next must be done."

"But along what lines?" Chick inquired.

"One is opened, Chick, by a single significant point," Nick replied. "The crooks must have learned several days ago what costume Mrs. Waldmere intended wearing, or they would not have been able, nor have had time, to prepare a duplicate of it."

"True, Nick; that goes without saying."

"The question is, then, from whom did they get their information?" Nick proceeded. "Mrs. Waldmere discussed the costume with her husband, and also confided in only one intimate friend, Clara Ringold."

"The crooks may have got their information, then, from a servant in one house or the other."

"That's the very point. But it was a servant in the Ringold house."

"Why do you feel so sure of that?"

"For several reasons," said Nick. "First, because Waldmere is a fine fellow and his wife a lovable mistress, and their servants would be much less likely to be treacherous than persons employed elsewhere."

"There is some truth in that," Chick allowed.

"Second, because the crooks made a mark of the Ringolds and used their invitation cards," Nick went on. "Why did they select that Brooklyn couple, instead of some invited couple living nearer?"

"You say."

"First, because there would be less danger of detection, of a personal call at the Carrington residence when the telephone proved useless, than in the case of persons living in town."

"That's true."

"Second, because the rascals most likely selected the very couple from whose servant they had got the information, knowing that inquiries would subsequently be made, and that the servant could keep them still further informed as to what investigations were being made and what was suspected."

"By Jove, there is something in that, Nick, also."

"And that is why I suspect a servant in the Ringold house, some one who overheard Mrs. Waldmere and Mrs. Ringold discussing their costumes."

"Why didn't you question the Ringolds about their servants last night, then?"

"Because I had rung them up at two o'clock in the morning," said Nick. "If the servant heard the bell, he, or she, as the case may be, would have suspected my mission and might have been in a position to play the eavesdropper without being detected. I didn't want my suspicion discovered. It would put the servant on his guard, and us at a corresponding disadvantage."

"I see," Chick nodded. "It was a wise precaution."

"You had better go over there this morning, however, and talk with Mrs. Ringold," Nick added. "Your identity and mission may not be suspected, while the servant might have seen Patsy and me last night when we passed through the lighted hall. Find out who is employed in the house and what is known about them."

"I've got you," said Chick. "Leave it to me."

"Aren't you overlooking one point, chief?" questioned Patsy, who had been listening to the foregoing.

"What point is that, Patsy?"

"The crooks may have learned from the costumer, or from one of his clerks, what costume Mrs. Waldmere intended wearing."

"I have thought of that, but it is quite improbable," said Nick. "They would not have known, to begin with, that Mrs. Waldmere had any intention of hiring a costume from Perrot. Furthermore, costumers of his high standing do not betray their patrons, and crooks know it and would have sought elsewhere for the desired information."

"Gee! I guess you're right, chief, after all."

"I think my other suspicion is the correct one."

"I'll run over to Brooklyn, then, at once," said Chick.

"Do so," Nick replied, rising. "I'll pay Perrot a visit in the meantime and see what I can learn from him. The costume worn by Mrs. Waldmere must have been previously seen by the duplicate Night, whoever she was, or she could not have duplicated it. We'll look into that. You may go with me, Patsy."

CHAPTER IV.

A SCARLET THREAD.

It was eleven o'clock when Nick Carter and Patsy entered the extensive business establishment of the leading New York costumer, Monsieur Jules Perrot, in Fifth Avenue. Perrot himself, a suave and polished Frenchman, happened to be conspicuously in evidence and hastened to meet them, bowing and smiling and rubbing his hands.

Nick addressed him quietly and introduced, himself, evoking ejaculations and a more intent and interested stare from Perrot, which turned to an expression of gravity when the detective stated his mission.

"I will aid you wiz pleasure, monsieur," he said readily. "Walk into my office, please, both of you. Ze devil must have been abroad last night, ze wolf in ze lamb's clothing. *Pardieu!* your case is not all, Monsieur Carter. There is another."

"Another, Mr. Perrot?" questioned Nick. "What do you mean?"

"Wait! I will bring my books," said Perrot, turning to enter an outer office. "I will bring my books—and ze letter!"

"Gee! this looks like something more in the wind," remarked Patsy.

"I am more inclined to think that all relates to one job," Nick replied. "It would be strange, indeed, if there were two at just this time and place. We can presently tell."

Perrot returned while Nick was speaking, bringing a book containing the daily record of his rented costumes, and over his arm—the costume of a Mexican toreador, seen by Nick the previous night, and worn by the man who had slipped the forged note into the hands of Mollie Waldmere.

"H'm! I thought so," Nick quietly remarked to Patsy, at once recognizing the costume. "There is but one job, in which all of these costumes figure. I will stake my reputation on that."

"Ziss was returned to me ziss morning by a messenger," said Perrot, laying the costume on a table. "In ze pocket of ze blouse was found ziss sheet of paper, on which is written—but you shall see. You shall see for yourself, Monsieur Carter."

He turned to an open roll-top desk, from which he took a somewhat crumpled scrap of paper, evidently torn from a notebook. Written on it with a lead pencil were the following lines:

"DEAR OLD PAL: I am waiting with the car where you directed. Bring the gink out quickly, or a gun may move me on. Land him in the car, pal, and I'll do the rest. I've got the stuff to quiet him until we can slip him the steel. I'll pick you up as directed. Have the cat land him and there'll be nothing to it. TONY."

Nick Carter frowned while he read this communication, so suggestive of sanguinary designs. Had it been written by the driver of the limousine in which Waldmere was seen to depart with an unknown woman? Was it she referred to as the cat? Had the note been sent in to the wearer of the toreador costume? Had he slipped it into the pocket and inadvertently left it there when returning the costume?

Naturally, of course, these questions at once arose in Nick's mind, and they seemed to compel affirmative answers. He gave the note to Patsy to read, then turned to Perrot and inquired:

"When was this costume returned?"

"A messenger brought it about an hour ago," said Perrot. "My girl Marie found the paper in the pocket and brought it to me. It was not there when the costume went out. We are sure of that, Monsieur Carter."

"Who had the costume last night?"

"It was let to a man who gave the name of John Talbot, address Lexington Avenue. He paid in advance and sent for ze costume yesterday afternoon. I have sent my clerk to ze address, but no such a man is known there."

"That does not surprise me," said Nick. "Talbot was a stranger to you?"

"Yes, Monsieur Carter, a total stranger."

"Do you recall him? Can you describe him?"

"Only that he is a man of good build, quite dark, and with a beard."

"The beard cuts no ice," said Nick, taking the note from Patsy. "If engaged in such devilry as this suggests, he would have called here in disguise. I will keep this note, Mr. Perrot, and look into the matter."

Perrot signified his consent with a bow, a smile, and numerous gestures.

"*Pardieu!*" he exclaimed. "As you will, Monsieur Carter. I wondered if I ought to give it to ze police."

"You have done better," Nick assured him. "Now, Mr. Perrot, about the costume hired by Mrs. Archie Waldmere."

"Ha, I remember!" said Perrot. "Madame is one fine lady. It was ze lace costume of Night."

"That's the one," bowed Nick. "Do you remember when she engaged it?"

"One week to-day, Monsieur Carter. Wait—I will be sure. I will show you ze entry."

Perrot hastened to find it in the book, and the date confirmed his statement.

"Was the costume seen, or let to any other person, during the week?" Nick inquired.

"It was, monsieur," Perrot said quickly. "It was let two days later to a young woman who—wait! I will show you. Ha, it is here! To Miss Belle Blair, Boston Road, Fordham. She paid in advance and returned it ze next day. It was in ze pairfect order. One would not think she had worn it."

"Nor had she," Nick said dryly.

"Hey! What is that? You think——"

"I think, Perrot, that you must say nothing of any of this to others," Nick pointedly interrupted. "There is a crime involved, and I rely upon your discretion."

"*Pardieu!* You may safely do so."

"The Night costume was hired only in order to make one so nearly resembling it as to defy ordinary inspection," Nick added. "But the name of the woman is not Belle Blair, nor does she reside in Fordham. She is a crook, as well as the said Talbot."

"That's dead open and shut, chief," remarked Patsy. "They worked along the same lines."

"Exactly," Nick nodded; then, to Perrot: "Have the costumes let to Mr. and Mrs. Waldmere been returned?"

"Not yet, Monsieur Carter, and there is no haste. I know them. That is enough."

"And I think you can add nothing to the information you have given me," said Nick, smiling. "I am obliged to you for it. Here is my card. If anything turns up later, perchance, telephone to me."

Perrot promised to do so, and the detective departed.

"Gee! this certainly looks bad, chief, don't it?" questioned Patsy, as they walked down the avenue.

"Superficially, Patsy, it certainly does," Nick allowed.

"Was some one out to get Waldmere? Has he been turned down in cold blood?"

"I am not ready to say. I wish to dig a little deeper."

One o'clock that afternoon brought additional evidence. It came through Monsieur Perrot, who was admitted to the detective's residence in a state of suppressed excitement.

He brought in a paper wrapper—the cape of the Spanish-cavalier costume worn by Archie Waldmere the previous night.

It was gashed in two places with a knife, as if the wearer had been stabbed, and the cloth was saturated with blood.

Perrot stated that it had been found by an East River boatman. It was caught on a spike in the river wall at which one of the crosstown streets end, directly over the swirling waters of the East River.

The boatman had given the cape to a policeman, who found Perrot's name on it and began an investigation. When told that Nick already was at work on the case, the officer at once sent the costumer to the detective to exhibit the garment and state the circumstances mentioned.

Nick examined the cape carefully after Perrot had departed, and subjected the stains to a test.

"Human blood, Patsy," he remarked. "There is no question about it."

"Gee! the case looks worse and worse," Patsy replied gravely. "It appears like dollars to fried holes that Waldmere was knifed to death. The collar is torn, as if he put up a struggle."

"So I see," Nick nodded, still inspecting the garment.

"And the two gashes are on the left side, as if thrusts were aimed at his heart. Gee whiz! it looks to me, chief, as if he was brutally killed and then chucked into the East River."

"Go up to the street Bolton mentioned," said Nick, referring to the policeman. "See whether there is any sign of blood on the river wall, or the near street. Question the people living close by and find out whether a motor car was heard to stop there during the night."

"I've got you, chief," said Patsy, hastening to make ready.

"Report as soon as possible."

"Trust me for that."

It was three o'clock when Patsy returned, and his report was still further convincing.

He had found marks of blood on the river wall and in the near street.

Two near residents, moreover, had heard a motor car stop there just before midnight, but had supposed only that some person was returning home.

Nick heard this report without any comments. It was not much different from what he was expecting.

Chick Carter had returned from Brooklyn, in the meantime, and was discussing his call on Mrs. Ringold when Patsy entered. He now resumed it with Nick, saying quite earnestly:

"They employ only four servants. One is a chauffeur, but he is married and has a home of his own."

"He's out of it, then," said Nick. "Who are the others?"

"A housekeeper of nearly sixty, who has been there several years."

"It's safe to drop her, also."

"That leaves only the cook, in whom Mrs. Ringold has absolute confidence, and a girl who serves as a maid, named Annette Levine. She has been there less than a year."

"Did you see her?" Nick inquired.

"Rather!" said Chick expressively. "She was so much in evidence that I could not help suspecting her."

"You mean?"

"Merely that she passed through the hall five times while I was talking with Mrs. Ringold in the library," Chick explained. "I had cautioned Mrs. Ringold to speak low, so I know that the girl could not have overheard us. But I noticed that she glanced furtively into the room each time she passed the open door."

"Gee! that girl needs looking after," said Patsy, who had been listening.

"Describe her, Chick."

"Oh, she's a slender, thin-featured girl of about twenty, possibly a little older. She has gray, catty eyes and a foxy countenance. I agree with Patsy that she needs looking after."

Nick turned abruptly to his junior assistant.

"Go over there, Patsy, and watch the house until you are sure Annette Levine is in bed for the night," he directed.

"I told Mrs. Ringold to give the girl the evening, if she asked for it," put in Chick.

"So much the better. You will know what to do, Patsy, in that case."

"You bet I'll know, chief," cried Patsy, hurriedly departing.

"In the meantime, Chick, you had better see the policemen who were on duty in the street back of the Carrington place last night," said Nick. "One of them may have noticed that particular limousine, or its driver. Find out who they were and what they can tell you."

CHAPTER V.

THE DOUBLE REFLECTION.

Nick Carter was alone in his library at five o'clock that afternoon. Both Chick and Patsy still were absent and at work on the mystifying case.

As he frequently did when wishing to concentrate his mind upon a difficult problem, Nick had stretched himself on the library couch, relaxing physically, as an aid to his mental operations.

The dusk of the January afternoon had deepened into darkness. Joseph, the detective's butler, had switched on the lights in the hall, the business office, and library, and he then was in the rear of the house, directing preparations for dinner.

Nick was lying with his eyes closed, deep in thought, undisturbed by the faint sounds from the avenue outside, scarce breaking the stillness then in the hall and library.

Nick was thinking of the missing man, the titled Eng-

glishman, of Lord Archie Waldmere, and of the two previous cases in which he had served him so successfully, and in both of which the now notorious crook and escaped convict, Stuart Floyd, had figured conspicuously.

Nick was reviewing these sensational cases, as well as that then engaging him. He was wondering whether, as Chick had suggested, revenge was the motive in the present strange affair and whether Stuart Floyd might, after all, be back of the whole business.

The couch on which Nick was lying was so placed that a person reclining on it faced a mirror on one of the walls, that opposite the open door leading into the hall.

In the hall and nearly opposite this door was a large coat-and-hat stand, backed with a plate mirror. It stood at such an angle that a person lying on the couch and looking into the library mirror, which hung at an angle from the wall, could see the mirror in the hatstand, and reflected in that a portion of the hall and the front door leading to the street.

In the front door was an oval plate-glass window, with filmy lace curtains draped daintily to each side. It was plainly visible from the library by means of the double reflection under the conditions described.

The French clock on the library mantel struck the half after five.

Nick Carter heard it. It recalled to his mind the single stroke of the clock in the hall of the Carrington mansion, the half after ten the night before, a fateful moment.

Sensitive in the superlative degree, particularly to outside influences, and still thinking of the knave by whom Waldmere twice had been victimized, Nick suddenly opened his eyes.

He started slightly. He thought for an instant that he beheld a ghost, an apparition, or some mental fantasy called up by the nature of his thoughts.

For his eyes were turned toward the mirror on the wall, and in double reflection he saw the brightly lighted front hall, the massive front door, the oval window; and he beheld between the parted lace draperies the face of a man peering into the hall—the face of Stuart Floyd.

It would have caused most men to leap up from the couch, but Nick Carter never lost command of himself. He knew on the instant that this was no mental fantasy, no optical illusion.

There was no mistaking that clean-cut, hard-featured face, with its gleaming, malignant eyes and drawn, sinister lips. Its expression was like that of a dog about to bite.

"Floyd himself, as sure as fate," flashed through Nick's mind. "He's gazing in here with some object in view. Can he see me, I wonder, as plainly as I can see him? He will take to his heels, in that case, if I stir to undertake catching him. But how can I otherwise get him, or contrive——"

Nick's train of thought ended abruptly.

The face at the window suddenly vanished. Nick now leaped up and rushed through the hall, hurriedly opening the front door and descending the steps to the sidewalk. He gazed quickly in all directions. There were pedestrians to be seen in all directions—but no sign of Stuart Floyd.

An approaching taxicab was swerving toward the curbing. The glare of its lamps dazzled Nick's eyes and prevented his seeing distinctly. He turned sharp on his heel and entered the house, going into his library, which then was unoccupied.

"By Jove, that was strange," he said to himself, taking the swivel chair at his desk. "That certainly was Stuart Floyd. But why was he gazing into my house? Has he vengeful designs upon me? Is he out to plant a bomb, or to turn some other cowardly trick? If he——"

The doorbell rang, ending Nick's train of thought, and he heard his butler going through the hall to answer the summons. He sprang up and intercepted him, saying quickly:

"Go back, Joseph, to the kitchen. I will answer the bell. There may be something doing."

Joseph looked surprised, but Nick did not say what more he had in mind. It was not in his nature to let another face possible peril, instead of meeting it himself. He saw Joseph retreating, and he then strode to the door and opened it.

The taxicab mentioned had stopped in front of the house. Its passenger had alighted and was standing on the steps.

"I'm looking for Mr. Nick Carter," said he. "My driver says this is where he resides"

"That is correct," said Nick.

"Is he at home? I have a letter of introduction to him from——"

"Come in, sir," Nick interposed. "Walk into my library and take a chair. What can I do for you?"

"Ah!" exclaimed the stranger. "You are Mr. Carter, then?"

"Yes. Be seated."

Nick had sized up his visitor while speaking. He was a tall man of powerful build and somewhat over fifty. He was smooth shaved, with strong features, quite an aggressive expression, and searching gray eyes. His mouth was broad, his lips thin, his chin square, and determined.

It was a face that did not impress Nick favorably. It evinced characteristics that were not pleasing to the keen insight of the detective. The stranger was well dressed, however, in a plaid suit and voluminous frieze overcoat, both of pronounced English cut and pattern.

"I am glad I find you at home, Mr. Carter," he said, in sonorous tones, taking a chair near that of the detective and producing a letter from his breast pocket. "Here is the introduction I mentioned. You are acquainted with Captain Phil Grady, of Scotland Yard, who is also a personal friend of mine. He is the writer and he advised me to see you."

Nick felt some of his misgivings beginning to melt away. He glanced through the letter, introducing one Sir Edward Chadwick, of London, and he then smiled and shook hands with the Englishman.

"I know Grady very well, Mr. Chadwick," he replied. "I am pleased to know you, also. How is my old friend, and when did you last see him?"

"Quite recently, Mr. Carter, and I left him well," rejoined Chadwick, with a smile softening the stern line of his thin lips. "I arrived in Boston this morning and came to New York by rail. I am here on important business and need your advice, and possibly your aid. I am stopping at the New Oriental."

"I will be glad to be of any service to you," said Nick. "What is the nature of your business?"

"I wish to find a young man who, I have reason to believe, is somewhere in the United States."

"Ah, I see."

"I am a stranger here, and appreciate, of course, the difficulties of my undertaking," Chadwick continued, with a suavity that Nick did not quite fancy. "I am his uncle, however, and accepted the mission at the earnest solicitation of his father, my elder brother, who now is on his deathbed, if not already dead."

"I understand," bowed the detective. "What is your nephew's name and when did you last hear from him?"

"Nearly three years ago."

"Where was he at that time?"

"He then was in London," said Chadwick, spreading his large hands on his knees. "He defied his father and was disinherited and cast out by his entire family, myself included. He became infatuated with a chorus girl in an American opera company, and married her in spite of his father's bitter opposition, the Honorable Earl of Eggleston. He fled with her from England, and——"

"One moment," Nick interposed. "The young man is Lord Archie Waldmere, I think, a son of the Earl of Eggleston by his second wife, now deceased."

Sir Edward Chadwick stared with manifest amazement.

"Goodness!" he exclaimed. "Is it possible, Mr. Carter, that you know him?"

"I am quite well acquainted with him."

"And you know where he may be found?"

"Well, not at just this moment," Nick said, a bit dryly. "He has been living in New York, however, for the past two years."

"Well, well, that is most surprising. This is great and glorious news," cried Chadwick, vigorously rubbing his hands. "Captain Grady was right. He said that I would get next to the right man, Mr. Carter, if I called upon you. Really, I am overjoyed."

Nick somehow felt that the speaker's joy was not so deep as he asserted. His voice had a twang that grated on the detective's ears. His narrow eyes gleamed and glittered in a way, moreover, that Nick did not fancy. With no show of these distrustful feelings, however, he said agreeably:

"It certainly appears that you have come to the right man, Mr. Chadwick. So the Earl of Eggleston is on his deathbed, is he?"

"Alas, yes!"

"Is that why he is seeking his son?"

"Exactly," bowed Sir Edward. "His only other son, who would have been the heir to his title and his estate, died seven months ago. The earl has no direct male successor except Lord Waldmere. He desires a reconciliation, therefore, and is anxious to forgive the recreant son and reinstate him as heir to his title and property. That is as it should be, Mr. Carter, and I have done all in my power to bring it about."

"No doubt," said Nick, gazing steadily at his visitor. "This will be good news for Waldmere, providing he can be found."

"Found?" echoed the Englishman inquiringly. "What do you mean by found? I thought you knew where he was living."

"So I do," said Nick. "Where he now is living, or whether he is living, at present, are open questions."

"What do you mean?" questioned Chadwick, with a gasp. "I don't understand you."

"I will make it plain with a very few words," Nick replied.

He swung round a little in his chair while speaking, and he then proceeded to tell his visitor of the disappearance of Waldmere, and of the circumstances and apprehensions concerning him.

The Englishman listened, with occasional interruptions and questions, and with almost constant wringing of his hands.

"Well, well, this is terrible, terrible," he declared, after Nick had concluded. "This news will kill his father, if not already dead. You say you are at work on the case, Mr. Carter. Have you no clew, no encouragement to give me?"

Nick already had decided that he would not disclose any of his suspicions. He shook his head and replied gravely:

"I can say nothing favorable at present. I don't know what my further investigations may bring to light."

"But will you confer with me?" Sir Edward questioned. "Will you let me aid you? Will you keep me informed ——"

"Yes, certainly," Nick interposed. "I will inform you promptly when I have discovered anything definite. I will at once telephone to you, Mr. Chadwick, if you intend remaining at the Oriental."

"That is my intention, of course, now that I have learned so much from you, and depend upon you so completely."

"You shall hear from me, then, sooner or later," Nick earnestly assured him. "Frankly, I am all at sea at present."

"Well, well, I am sorry, sorry enough to hear that," declared Sir Edward, unconscious of the sharper gleam in his narrow eyes, but which was instantly noticed by the detective.

"If you would like to meet Mrs. Waldmere, however," said Nick, "I will call on her with you and——"

"No, no, I do not wish to meet her, Mr. Carter, at present," protested the Englishman, with a half-subdued growl. "She was the apple of discord. I suppose we will have to put up with her. I will meet her after Lord Waldmere has been found and—but that is enough for the present, enough for the present," he abruptly broke off, rising to go. "Let me hear from you, Mr. Carter. Telephone to me, or call to see me. I shall be on nettles until you find Lord Waldmere safe and sound."

"Unless I am much mistaken and less discerning than you think me, you soon will be on nettles for an entirely different reason," Nick said to himself, while he arose and accompanied Sir Edward Chadwick to the door.

CHAPTER VI.

PLAYING THE SPY.

It was six o'clock when Sir Edward Chadwick left Nick Carter's residence and departed in the waiting taxicab. Half an hour later Chick Carter came in and entered the library.

He found Nick seated at his desk. Lying on it were several articles that figured as evidence in the case, also a pad of cable blanks and a thick blue book as large as an unabridged dictionary.

On a chair near by was the gashed and bloody cape

worn by Waldmere the previous night, the gory aspect and circumstances in connection with which seemed to tell beyond reasonable doubt his tragic fate.

"Ah, it's you, Chick," Nick remarked, looking up when his assistant entered. "Anything new?"

"No, nothing," said Chick, removing his overcoat and hat and drawing up a chair. "I have tried in vain to trace the murder car, the limousine in which Waldmere was brutally done to a frazzle. There seems to be nothing in it, as far as I see, except murder most foul and——"

"Oh, but there is," Nick interrupted, turning in his swivel chair.

"Something else to it?"

"Exactly."

"What do you mean?" Chick questioned, gazing. "Have you discovered new evidence?"

"I have had a visitor and—and seen a devil," Nick dryly asserted.

"Seen a devil!"

"A knave who has all the makings of one. None other than Stuart Floyd."

"Great Scott!" Chick exclaimed. "You don't mean, Nick, that he was your visitor?"

"Not exactly," said Nick. "He only looked in, Chick, probably with some evil design, though I cannot say for what."

"And your visitor?"

"He was Sir Edward Chadwick, of London, England, who said he arrived in Boston this morning. I am glad he called. He forms, unless I am much mistaken, the strongest link in the chain I am welding together."

"Well, well, you surprise me," said Chick. "Who the deuce is Sir Edward Chadwick, and what did he want?"

"I think he wanted to learn what I suspect and am doing in this case," Nick replied. "He met with no success, however, but departed quite convinced that I am all in the dark. I made sure of that, for I had talked with him only a few minutes when I began to distrust him."

Nick then stated in detail what had passed between him and the Englishman, and then proceeded to inform Chick what he since had been doing.

"I have been looking him up," said he, with a glance at the English blue book mentioned. "Sir Edward Chadwick is the only brother of the Earl of Eggleston, Lord Waldmere having taken the name of his mother after his marriage and estrangement from his father, she having been his second wife and now dead for many years."

"I remember his saying so."

"Chadwick is married and has one son, now about thirty years old. I have cabled to Captain Grady for particulars as to the character and standing of both, I ought to receive an answer by to-morrow morning."

"Most likely. They are very prompt."

"Chadwick stated that he arrived in Boston this morning," Nick went on. "I have telephoned to Boston, also, and learned that no liner arrived there this morning, none since last Saturday, four days ago."

"By Jove, that smacks of a lie and certainly warrants suspicion."

"I think Chadwick has been here longer, and has been framing up this job. Thinking himself entirely free from suspicion, and that the steps he has taken and his pretended anxiety to find Waldmere will shield him from distrust, he feels confident that no one will think of looking up his movements with a view to confirming any of his statements."

"I see," Chick nodded. "But what do you suspect?"

"Well, if there was no direct male heir to the estate and title of the Earl of Eggleston, both would fall legally, and possibly by will, to Sir Edward Chadwick," Nick said pointedly.

"You suspect him of treachery, then, and of playing a deep game."

"That hits the nail on the head."

"You think he has conspired with others to murder Waldmere, and remove the only barrier to his inheriting the estate and title of his brother?"

"That also rings a bull's-eye," Nick nodded.

"But wouldn't he incur such serious suspicion at home, Nick, that he might——"

"Not in the way he has undertaken the job," Nick interposed. "He ostensibly is acting as agent for the Earl of Eggleston, and apparently is engaged in a genuine search for Waldmere. He has appealed to Scotland Yard and got a letter of introduction to me. I feel quite sure, however, that both steps were taken only to give color to his pretentions. If I am right, Chick, he is getting in his secret work with the help of knaves hired for the purpose, while he keeps well in the background and pretends to be playing an honorable part."

"But the killing of Waldmere may enable him to——"

"I'm not sure that there has been any killing," Nick again interrupted.

"No murder?"

"Not yet."

"Great guns!" Chick exclaimed. "That's encouraging, at least, but why do you think so?"

"I have been looking over some of this evidence again," said Nick, glancing at the articles on his desk. "I think I detect the work of a crook who is as crafty and designing as Chadwick himself, assuming that I have sized him up correctly."

"You mean Floyd?"

"Yes."

"Why do you think he figures in the case?"

"Because of his presence at my door to-night and the fact that, even while he fled, the taxicab containing Chadwick was approaching my house," said Nick. "There was something more than a coincidence, Chick, in that both were here at the same time. It is very significant of relations between them."

"By Jove, that does seem reasonable," said Chick. "I agree with you."

"Just what relations exist between them, however, and how the two came together, are open questions," Nick added. "Floyd is a keen and clever rascal. He would not engage in such a job as this, if my suspicions are correct, without clearly seeing his way to getting all that would be coming to him. He would not undertake such a job, moreover, for any small sum."

"That's true."

"Bear in mind, now, that Chadwick is a long way from home. It's a hundred to one that he has not at immediate command any such sum as Floyd would require, nor could he easily obtain it from England without laying himself liable to subsequent suspicion."

"That's right, too."

"What's the logical deduction, then?"

"You say."

"Simply this—that Floyd might go so far as to get away with Waldmere and plant all of the evidence indicating that he has been murdered, but he would go no further than that," Nick pointedly reasoned. "He would not complete the job, nor put himself in a way to the electric chair, until he had received the price agreed upon for the murder. He would hold Waldmere a prisoner until he got his money."

"I see the point," Chick nodded. "That would, indeed, be very like him."

"Here, now, is something in support of that theory," said Nick, turning to his desk. "Here is the note that lured Mollie Waldmere to the west-front chamber that she might not see the duplicate Night and prevent her from enticing Waldmere from the house.

"Here are the two admission cards craftily obtained from the Ringolds, on which were written the names of the costumes worn by the two crooks. Here, too, is the note found in the pocket of the Mexican costume, apparently sent to the wearer by a confederate and indicating that Waldmere was to be taken away in a limousine and murdered."

"I see," said Chick, bending over the desk to examine them.

"Do you see anything specially significant in connection with them?"

"I can't say that I do."

"Well, I can," said Nick. "The writing on all of these articles is the same, or so nearly alike that I am sure that the same man wrote all of them."

"By Jove, I think so, too, now that you point it out," said Chick. "They must have been written by the wearer of the Mexican costume, who hired it from Perrot under the name of Talbot."

"Certainly, since it was he who wrote the note given by him to Mollie Waldmere."

"Unquestionably."

"Plainly, then, the chauffeur's note was not sent in to him at all." Nick continued. "He wrote it himself. He did so only to put it in the pocket of his costume, knowing it would be found later and that murder would then be suspected, a suspicion seemingly confirmed by the finding of the gashed and bloodstained cape worn by Waldmere."

"You now think, then, that the whole business is only a blind?"

"The murder part of it."

"And that Waldmere is alive?"

"I do."

"And confined somewhere pending a settlement for the job?"

"That is precisely what I suspect."

"By Jove, I am inclined to think you are right," Chick now said earnestly. "But what's to be done, Nick, in that case?"

"I already have decided," said Nick. "I was waiting only for you to return."

"What's your scheme?"

"Chadwick is a stranger in New York. He cannot go about alone, nor will he venture into the underworld, where, if I am right, Waldmere is in custody. An interview with him may be necessary, however, possibly several of them, and he's long odds that they will be held in Chadwick's quarters in the Oriental, since he thinks he has blinded me and feels safe from suspicion."

"Quite likely, Nick, but what's your scheme?" Chick repeated.

"We'll plant a dictograph in Chadwick's apartments."

"Ah, I see."

"That is, providing we can get an adjoining, or an opposite room," Nick added. "We then can watch his apartments and overhear anything said there. There is no time like the present, moreover, for he left here only an hour ago, presumably to return to the hotel, and he very likely will be at dinner when we arrive there."

"We could, in that case, turn the trick in a very few minutes."

"We'll attempt it," said Nick, taking the instrument and a coil of fine, pliable wire from a drawer in his desk. "We'll go up there in disguise. Have a gun on your hip, also, for there's no telling what may come off."

"I'll wear two, Nick, to make a dead-sure thing of it," Chick said dryly.

It was seven o'clock when the two detectives arrived at the New Oriental, where they lost no time in getting in their work.

Nick confided in the chief clerk, from whom he learned that Chadwick had arrived that afternoon, that he was traveling alone, and had just gone in to dinner, also that he had a small suite on the third floor.

One directly opposite to it happened to be unoccupied, and no less than ten minutes after their arrival at the hotel both detectives were established in the vacant suite.

"Now, Chick, we'll work lively," Nick remarked, throwing off his coat and hat. "You keep an eye on the corridor. I'll do the painting."

"I've got you," Chick nodded. "Lie low, if you hear me whistle."

Nick stole out with the dictograph and wire, as well as the tools he required. He opened the opposite door with a picklock and entered the suite, which consisted of only a sitting room, bedroom, and bath. The Englishman had left the lights on, and his outside garments and luggage were in the bedroom.

A table stood in the middle of the sitting room. Near one of the walls, that adjoining the hall, was a desk supplied with writing materials. It was prevented from standing flush against the wall by a projection of the baseboard, and Nick quickly attached the dictograph to the back of the desk, well out of sight.

He then ran the fine wire downward to the floor, tucking it between the carpet and the baseboard, and conducting it to the door. Then he ran it over the threshold, close to the jamb on the hinge side, and then under the hall carpet and into the opposite room.

No warning whistle from Chick had delayed him, and the entire work had occupied less than fifteen minutes.

"We now will wait developments," said Nick, when all was ready. "Out with the lights and set this door ajar. If this man has no visitor to-night, Chick, I shall be much mistaken."

Chick adjusted the door, leaving a crack, through which they could see that of the opposite suite, and both then sat down to wait in the darkness.

The steps of others could occasionally be heard in the corridor, but half an hour had passed when the Englishman returned to his apartments.

Both detectives saw him enter his lighted rooms, consulting his watch when he closed the door.

"That may be significant," Nick whispered. "He expects some one, perhaps, at an appointed time."

Nick was right, and eight o'clock brought the expected visitor.

He knocked once, then twice, on the Englishman's door. The detectives could see him quite plainly in the lighted corridor, a stocky, smooth-shaved man in a plaid overcoat and wearing a fur cap.

Nick could see his face only in profile while he waited, but he felt sure he had previously seen him, though he could not then say where.

When Sir Edward Chadwick admitted him, however, and the stocky man entered and removed his cap, revealing in the bright light of the room a strikingly bald head, as round as a bullet and glistening like a billiard ball, Nick identified him on the instant.

"Great Scott!" he whispered to Chick, as the Englishman closed the door. "That's Baldy Gammon. That does settle it."

CHAPTER VII.

MR. PIMLICO.

Nick Carter, though he never had seen the man, now knew where he had seen the face. He had trained himself never to forget the face of a crook, even though seen only as he had seen that of Baldy Gammon.

It was included in his rogues' gallery, two excellent photographs, front and profile, on a Bertillon signaletic card sent to him from Scotland Yard about two years before.

The card contained also a description and the criminal record of one Jasper Gammon, nicknamed Baldy Gammon because of his bald head. There could be no mistaking this fellow, who had a notorious record as a confidence man, sneak thief, and all-around swindler.

"Baldy Gammon?" muttered Chick, not placing him. "Who the deuce is he?"

Nick quietly informed him, at the same time taking up the dictograph receiver and holding it to his ear. Every word uttered in the opposite suite could be distinctly heard, every sound that was made, in fact, and Nick whispered the interview to Chick while the scene in the suite across the hall was in progress. Minds as keen and perceptive as those of the two detectives could easily supply most of the following invisible details:

Sir Edward Chadwick closed the door and waved Baldy Gammon to a chair, taking one opposite his visitor.

"Well, you are on time," he said approvingly, though his voice still had the hard twang that had grated on Nick's ears and suggested the flinty nature of the speaker.

"Yes, Sir Edud," replied Gammon, with a pronounced vernacular. "I allas makes it a point to be on time—allas, Sir Edud."

"Well, skip all else and light upon the issue," said Chadwick. "What's the verdict?"

Baldy Gammon drew forward in his chair and announced, with manifest satisfaction, together with a leer in his coal-black eyes:

"We've got 'im, Sir Edud, got 'im foul and dead to rights. In other words, Sir Edud, we've got 'im just where we wants 'im."

"I already know that, Mr. Gammon," returned Chadwick bluntly.

"You does?"

Baldy Gammon looked surprised, and Sir Edward Chadwick proceeded to explain.

"I have called on Nick Carter and learned how the game was played and the stumblingblock removed," he said pointedly. "I thought it wise to cover my tracks by seeing this American detective without delay. He does not suspect me, nor will he, now, and though he is at work on the case, he frankly admitted that he is all in the dark."

"The which is a werry good place for 'im to be, Sir Edud," Gammon dryly vouchsafed. "Don't 'e know, then, as 'ow you 'ave been 'ere for nearly a week?"

"He knows nothing about me, Mr. Gammon, except what I saw fit to tell him."

"Well, it's safe to say, Sir Edud, as 'ow you'd tell 'im nothink worth knowin," said Gammon, with a grin.

"Come to the point," frowned Chadwick. "I did not employ you to comment upon my sagacity."

"Werry true, Sir Edud; werry true, indeed."

"Come to the point. Is it all over?"

Baldly Gammon shook his almost hairless head and appeared a little disturbed.

"Well, not quite, Sir Edud, not quite," he reluctantly admitted.

"What do you mean, Gammon?" Sir Edward harshly demanded. "What do you mean by not quite? Hasn't he been disposed of, put out of the way, out of existence?"

"Not yet, Sir Edud."

"Why not? Hang it, why the delay? I inferred from what Carter told me that it was all over, that the infernal——"

"Now, 'old your 'osses, Sir Edud, 'old your 'osses," Gammon interrupted, with as much suavity as he could command. "It's as 'ow it cawn't be 'elped. I'll tell you just 'ow it is, Sir Edud."

"Do so, then, and lose no time about it," Chadwick commanded, frowning more darkly. "I had hoped you brought me better news."

"It's precisely what I suspected," Nick Carter murmured. "I'll wager my reputation on it."

"Looks so," Chick tersely agreed.

Baldy Gammon, having broken the ice, came forth with his explanation.

"It's like this, Sir Edud," he began. "When I came over 'ere for this 'ere work, knowing as 'ow you soon would follow me, I 'ad in mind the werry man for a job o' this kind. It don't matter what 'is name be, nor would 'e like me to inform you."

"I'm not at all anxious to know it."

"I've knowed 'im for some time, Sir Edud, and I knowed 'e would 'ave the right 'elp and a 'ead to frame up the job in the right way. 'Ow well he did it, Sir Edud, goes without saying. We've got the man. We've got 'im where we wants 'im."

"You know where I want him," snarled Chadwick harshly. "You know what depends upon his death, and ——"

"'Ear me out, Sir Edud," interrupted Gammon pacifically. "It's as 'ow we can turn 'im down at any moment."

"Why in thunder hasn't it been done, then? Why this needless delay? Delays are always dangerous."

"It's like this, Sir Edud," Gammon proceeded. "This covey I speak of, 'im as run the whole blooming job, and who can be banked on to do 'is part when the time comes—this 'ere covey don't feel dead sure of getting what's coming to 'im."

"The money you agreed upon? Is that what you mean?"

"That's what I means, Sir Edud, and ——"

"But couldn't you convince him that the money would be forthcoming?" snapped Chadwick impatiently. "You should have made it plain that he will finally get it."

"I tried to, so I did, Sir Edud, but it's as 'ow the covey don't feel that way," Gammon replied, a bit dubiously. "You see, Sir Edud, 'e wants to be dead sure of 'is afore taking the risk of a chair what isn't over-inviting. I could not tell 'im just who you are and all the facts, the which would be werry convincing. You ordered me not to do that, Sir Edud, and I allas act on the square. So the covey is 'olding off till sure——"

"Wait!" Sir Edward exclaimed harshly. "Where is this man? I must see him. I must talk with him myself. I can convince him that the money will be forthcoming. Send the man here to see me."

Baldy Gammon stared thoughtfully at the carpet for a moment.

"I ain't a bit sure as 'ow 'e'd come, Sir Edud, unless 'e comes in disguise," he then replied.

"I don't care how he comes, so be it he comes quickly," snapped the other.

"That could be inside of an hour, Sir Edud."

"I will wait here for him."

"'E has a silvery-gray wig and a flowing beard, the which I've seen 'im wear at times," observed Gammon. "I'm thinking as 'ow 'e would come in them."

"Let him wear them, then."

"And I will 'ave him use the same signal knock as I used."

"Once, then twice."

"Yes, Sir Edud."

"Very good. I will remember."

"To make dead sure," added Gammon, "I will 'ave 'im mention 'is name as Mr. Pimlico. That's no common name, Sir Edud, and you'll be sure it's 'im."

"I understand you, Gammon," Sir Edward said, with a growl. "Send the man here to-night. Tell him I insist upon seeing him."

Baldy Gammon arose with a bow and a gesture of assent, then hurriedly departed.

Nick Carter whispered a few words to Chick, then stole noiselessly out of the suite in which they had been listening.

It was half past eight when Baldy Gammon departed, leaving Sir Edward Chadwick to await the arrival of the said Mr. Pimlico.

Chick Carter made no move to prevent the departure of this London crook, nor to follow him. He remained seated in the darkness of the opposite suite, with the door still ajar and his gaze fixed upon that directly across the corridor.

Nine o'clock came and with it came Mr. Pimlico.

There could be no mistaking the man Baldy Gammon had described, with his silvery-gray hair and flowing beard, giving him the appearance of a man of seventy.

Chick heard him coming and saw Chadwick open the door in response to the signal knock. He surveyed the man a bit sharply, saying tersely:

"Well, sir?"

"My name is Pimlico," said the other.

"Ah! Come in."

The door closed behind the couple and Chick Carter seized the dictograph receiver.

Sir Edward Chadwick took a chair near the table, his visitor one directly opposite, saying, while he sat down:

"Gammon brought me word that you wish to see me."

"I do," Sir Edward said curtly.

"What need is there?" Mr. Pimlico demanded.

"Much need."

"He said he told you just how matters stand."

"So he did."

"I am taking chances by coming here, sir, even in disguise."

"There would have been no need of your coming, Mr. Pimlico, or whatever your name may be, if you had done what you had agreed to do," Sir Edward said, quite sternly.

"I have taken all of the steps agreed upon except one—the last step," Pimlico said, with ominous significance, but with unruffled calmness. "I am in a position to take that final step at any moment. But you have not forgotten, of course, that there is another side of the bargain."

"You mean——"

"The payment of the amount agreed upon," Pimlico put in firmly.

"That will be paid when your work is completed, when I have positive proof that it is done."

"What assurance have I of that?"

"My word of honor," said Sir Edward, with a steadily deepening frown. "That ought to be sufficient under such circumstances."

"Could there be more desperate circumstances?" Pimlico calmly inquired. "Bear in mind that you are a stranger to me, that I have taken the word of another for what I already have done, and to the effect that you are a responsible person and will make good. That is hardly enough, however, in view of the nature of the work and the risks involved. Before the final step is taken, ending the whole business, I must see the color of your money."

Sir Edward shifted uneasily in his chair and eyed his visitor more darkly. Pimlico's voice had a firmness that did not please him. He feared that he might find it impossible to move him, to prevail upon him to take that final step so essential to his knavish treachery. He feared that his designs might miscarry at this last moment. It was these fears that impelled him to go further than he otherwise would have gone—to the extent of confiding in his hireling.

He drew himself up, as if he suddenly came to that determination, saying with much less asperity:

"You mean, then, that you insist upon being paid in advance, Mr. Pimlico."

"That is what I mean," bowed Pimlico, deliberately stroking his gray beard.

"But I cannot comply with that demand."

"Cannot, sir, or will not?" Pimlico pointedly questioned.

"Cannot," Sir Edward said earnestly. "I would pay you

on the spot, my friend, if it were possible for me to do so."

"That's the point. How do I know that it ever will be possible?"

"I can convince you of that."

"In what way?"

"First tell me—if convinced of my integrity and ability to pay you later, will you complete the work you thus far have done so ably?"

"I will consider it, at least, and very possibly do it," said Pimlico, after a moment.

Sir Edward drew nearer the table and rested his arms on it. Gazing intently across it at his hearer, he said, with augmented feeling, but with voice somewhat lowered:

"I will tell you just where I stand and why I have done this, something I directed Gammon not to confide to you."

"Nor did he," said Pimlico simply.

"Gammon is a man of his word. I happen to know that, my friend, or I would not have employed him for work of this kind. So am I a man of my word," Sir Edward forcibly added. "I am a man of high standing in England, a man of character and ambition, in the way of which is the one barrier I now want removed. An earldom and a vast fortune await me when that is out of my way."

"This man Waldmere?"

"Yes."

"What is he to you?"

"I am his uncle. His father, the Earl of Eggleston, is my only brother. He is dying, if not already dead, and his title and vast estate will soon be mine, providing Waldmere is dead and out of the way. Can you doubt, then, that I will pay you the price agreed upon with Gammon?" Sir Edward forcibly questioned. "Why, man, I will pay even more liberally. I will double the amount, and it shall be paid when——"

"One moment," Pimlico interrupted. "Has Gammon told you where Waldmere is confined?"

"No, he has not."

"Or who I really am and where I hang out?"

"No, neither."

"Have you any idea?"

"Not the slightest. I have left it all to Gammon. Nor do I care about that, Mr. Pimlico," Sir Edward added. "If you will do what I require, if you will put this man away, if you will complete your work at once and contrive that positive proof of Waldmere's death shall be found, I will do all that I have agreed to do and something more than that, as soon as——"

He stopped short.

A pencil with which Pimlico had been toying had slipped from his fingers and fallen to the floor.

Sir Edward Chadwick leaned over to pick it up and replace it on the table. When he straightened up and again gazed at his visitor—he underwent a change as if death had suddenly claimed him.

There had been an equally quick change in the other.

Mr. Pimlico had disappeared. His gray wig and flowing beard were lying on the floor. His right hand held a revolver, his left a pair of handcuffs, and the stern face that now met the gaze of the horrified Englishman was that of—Nick Carter.

It wore an expression far different from that seen by the designing Englishman in the library of the detective's residence a short time before. He thought he then had played his cards well. He had succeeded only in sealing his own fate.

How he had been duped, by what means it had been accomplished, or how much more the detective knew than he had blindly told him—into none of these did Sir Edward Chadwick pause to inquire. With a half-smothered oath, with his great white teeth meeting with an audible snap, he started to rise and reached for a weapon.

Nick Carter was much too quick for him, however. His hands shot like a flash across the table. They closed with a viselike grip on those of the titled crook. There was a swirl of glittering steel around his brawny wrists, a quick snap of the double locks, and Sir Edward Chadwick was secured in manacles almost before he knew it.

"Take them off! Hang you, take them off!" he fiercely snarled, tugging vainly at them. "What's the meaning of this? What——"

"Silence!" Nick sternly commanded, forcing the frantic man back in his chair. "You know very well what it means. You are under arrest, Sir Edward Chadwick, a would-be murderer by your own blind confession. You will answer to the law for conspiracy with intent to kill. Now, having got the mastery, I will take steps to secure the hirelings."

The Englishman broke forth again with bitter oaths and imprecations, though his face had gone ghastly and his lips were as gray as ashes.

"Take them off! Take them off!" he repeated, striving vainly to break the steel bracelets. "You can do nothing. You cannot prove it. My word is as good as yours. There were no witnesses, no——"

"You are very much mistaken," Nick again interrupted sternly. "I have all the corroboration the law will require. There is a dictograph behind this desk, and my chief assistant in the opposite suite has heard every word you have said. I will call him, that you may see for yourself and end your vain struggles."

A cry failed to prove effective, however, and Nick stepped into the hall and threw open the door of the opposite suite.

It no longer was occupied.

Chick Carter had disappeared.

Nick wondered and waited—but waited vainly.

Chick did not return.

Nor did an hour bring any sign of—the genuine Mr. Pimlico.

CHAPTER VIII.

TAKING LONG CHANCES.

It was a misty, humid, disagreeable night, with the unseasonable January warm spell hanging on, making winter garments almost unbearable, though ordinary discretion precluded removing them.

Patsy Garvan found it damp and uncomfortable while watching the Ringold residence from a concealment in the adjoining grounds. He was glad when the early dusk of the afternoon deepened into darkness, enabling him to steal out and move around without incurring detection, thus relieving the monotony of his persistent vigil.

It was eight o'clock when his patience was finally rewarded. He had seen the Ringolds at dinner, had watched them through the lace-draped windows of the house, and

had seen Nan Levine serving at the table, then clearing it, and supping with another servant in the kitchen. Nothing in her looks or actions, however, denoted that she was in haste, or had any intention of going out that evening.

Patsy was agreeably disappointed, therefore, when he saw her leaving the house. She emerged from the side door, with a dark cloak enveloping her slender figure, while her head and face were covered with a veil. She tripped out to the street, where she paused to glance sharply around for a moment, and then she hurried away.

"Gee whiz! she is breaking cover, all right," thought Patsy, at once elated. "She's off on a definite mission, too, and that looks more like business. There's no mistaking her, for all she's so bundled up and closely veiled. That points to something doing, for fair. It's ten to one, now, that Chick sized her up correctly."

Stealing out, Patsy followed the girl with no great difficulty. He knew that his disguise would preclude recognition, even if she had seen him the previous night, as Nick had apprehended. It soon became obvious to Patsy, however, that she did not feel that she had incurred suspicion, or had any thought of being followed.

Patsy shadowed her over to New York, where she took the Third Avenue elevated. Leaving it a little later, she finally brought up at an inferior wooden house in a low street on the East Side. She darted up the inclosed steps and rang the bell three times, and she was admitted so quickly that Patsy was unable to see who answered the summons.

"She's under cover again, all right, but this looks still more like business," he said to himself. "But how am I to get next? That's the question."

Patsy had paused on the opposite side of the street and was sizing up the house and its surroundings. The ground floor was used for a small store. Over the door was a sign bearing the single word—Hogan.

"It looks like a measly little grocery store," muttered Patsy. "But why is it closed so early? Other shops around here are open. Hogan must have other business on for to-night, something doing in which that girl figures. Gee, I must contrive in some way to turn the trick!"

The front room of the dwelling over the store was in darkness, but Patsy could see that the roller shades were drawn down, with no sign of any person near them in the act of peering out. He could also see on the rear wall of an adjoining building the faint reflection of light from the side window of a rear room of the house.

"That's where the girl has gone," he rightly reasoned. "But who is with her and how am I to get up there? Those windows are a good ten feet from the ground. I'll have a look at the back of the crib. There may be a porch."

Moving more cautiously, Patsy found a narrow passageway between the house and the building mentioned, through which he stealthily picked his way into a small back yard, so small it was hardly worthy the name.

For the rear wall of a large garage fronting on the next street was within six feet of the back of the house. The yard was as dark as a pocket, moreover, but Patsy could feel the outlines of a bulkhead door, evidently opening into a cellar under the store.

There was no sign of a porch, or means of getting up to the second-floor windows. Patsy could see, nevertheless, that the curtain of one of them was up about an inch above the lower sash.

While looking up he also saw that the garage was quite a new one and that it was built of cement blocks, a building of only one story, and having a flat roof.

"If I can get up there, by gracious, I might get a look into that room, at least," he said to himself. "A look might help. I'll make a bid for it, even if I have to seek aid from whomever runs the shebang."

Feeling around a rear corner of the garage, bent upon finding a way to the front, Patsy discovered that the alternate corner blocks of cement were set inward about half an inch, a quite common and slightly ornamental construction, as courses of bricks at uniform distances are sometimes laid.

Naturally, of course, each receding block left a slight projection, the upper edge of that on which it was set, and Patsy was not long in finding that he could fix his toes on these projections, and, by grasping those above that he could mount to the garage roof almost as easily as if provided with a ladder.

"Gee! this was softer than I could have hoped," he said to himself when seated on the edge of the low roof. "The house is near, but not quite near enough. By Jove, if I had only a piece of—holy smoke! I'm a smelt if I haven't got it. Things sure are coming my way."

It was a piece of board that had caught his eye, a strip about six feet long and as many inches wide, and which evidently had been overlooked by the builders when cleaning up the roof of the garage.

Patsy seized it with much the same avidity as a terrier seizes a rat. Creeping along the roof with it, he quickly reached a point directly opposite the lighted window of the dwelling—that already specially noticed.

A narrow beam of light was shed out below the roller shade, lending a faint glow to the misty night air. Through the narrow space between the curtain and sash, however, Patsy could see only that there were several persons in the back room, which evidently was a kitchen, and he was too far from the closed window to hear their voices.

"Gee whittaker! I've got to get still nearer," he said to himself, ruefully gazing into the black abyss below. "I might as well be on top of the Flatiron Building. I must take a chance with this plank, by gracious, if I lose a leg."

Crouching on his hands and knees, proceeding all the while with the utmost quietude and caution, Patsy found that the strip of board was long enough to reach from the outside stone sill of the window to the edge of the garage roof, with about a three-inch rest on each end.

"It will support me, all right," he muttered, gazing at it after having gingerly placed it in position. "Gee! but it's a ticklish crawl. Can I wriggle out on it without displacing one end, or the other? If not, it will be a quick trip to the ground for mine!"

Patsy viewed it doubtfully for several moments. It was a stunt from which the boldest would have shrunk. Then he looked at the lighted window again and listened vainly—and his face then took on an expression that spoke louder than words.

"It's got to be done," he murmured decidedly. "There's nothing else to it. "I must find out who is in that room,

and what is going on there. I might as well be a bump on a log, as sitting here."

Starting up, Patsy removed his overcoat and hat, placing them near by on the roof.

He then crouched close to the edge, grasping each side of the plank as far out as he could reach.

He found that it rested firmly on each end, and he then worked his hands still farther out, gradually letting himself down until he lay flat upon it, with his feet on the garage roof and his head within eight inches of the house window, his eyes directly in line with the lower edge of the slightly raised curtain.

The beam of light from within fell full on his face. It looked unusually pale, but never more set and determined.

Patsy had reasoned that it might be more difficult to return than to get out there on his narrow support. But he had resolved to cross that bridge when he came to it.

It was enough for him, just then, that he had accomplished his immediate object. He now could see plainly into the room and also hear the voices of its occupants.

He took them in visually with a single swift glance—five persons.

One was a brawny Irishman in his shirt sleeves. He was seated near the stove and smoking a clay pipe.

Another was a corpulent, red-faced woman, whose garments denoted that she was the mistress of the house, as the other appeared to be its master.

"Hogan and his wife," thought Patsy. "I've seen him driving a taxi, too, and his wife most likely runs the little store."

Patsy afterward learned that he was right.

A third person was Annette Levine, divested of her outside garments.

A fourth was a dark, finely formed woman in the twenties, whom Patsy instantly recognized as a familiar character in the Tenderloin, one Lucy Devoll, a girl formerly intimate with the Vantoon sisters, then in prison for their complicity in two of the crimes committed by Stuart Floyd.

The fifth person was none other than the notorious crook himself—Stuart Floyd.

He looked white and pinched, and there was an abnormal glitter in his eyes that told of feverish anxiety and physical consumption, of the horrible price paid for traveling the downward path.

"Eureka!" thought Patsy, when he discovered these worthies. "I'm in right, if I can only stick here. If worse comes, I can wriggle around and drop into the yard. It's not more than ten feet."

Patsy lost nothing that was said in the room while these few thoughts passed through his mind.

Stuart Floyd was talking, addressing the girl who had entered only a few minutes before.

"What type of man is he, Nan, the one who called this morning?" he asked.

"A decent-looking, muscular man, smooth shaved," said Nan Levine, as she was called. "He's about medium complexion."

"It might have been Chick Carter," said Floyd, with knit brows. "You are sure it wasn't Nick himself?"

"I'm dead sure of that," nodded Nan. "I saw him over the baluster rail at two this morning, and also Patsy Garvan, as you call him. 'Twasn't either of them who called this morning, and I don't reckon he was a detective."

"Possibly not."

"I walked by the door three or four times, but I couldn't hear what he was saying to the mistress. They sat too far from the door."

"Gee! the chief was right," thought Patsy. "He's never wrong, by Jove, as far as that goes."

"Oh, I know the Carters are on the case," Floyd said moodily. "I got wise to that this afternoon."

"How was that, Stu?" inquired Hogan, removing his pipe.

"I saw the gink Gammon is serving going down Madison Avenue in a taxi," said Floyd. "Gammon thinks I ain't wise to him, but I am. From what Gammon has told me, I reckoned the English gink was going to pump Carter, or pull off some kind of a bluff. So I hurried down and had a look through Carter's front door."

"Gee! that's news to me," thought Patsy, with increasing interest.

"I saw Carter himself on a couch in one of the rooms," Floyd went on. "I piped him through a mirror in the hall. I'm not sure that he didn't pipe me, as well."

"Was the English gazabo there?" questioned Hogan.

"No," said Floyd bluntly. "The taxi driver must have blundered and went too far south. All of a sudden I saw him coming up the avenue and I knew he was going to stop at the dick's house."

"Thunder!" Lucy Devoll exclaimed. "What did you do?"

"Bolted," said Floyd grimly. "I made a quick get-away, you can bet on that. The gink went in there, and that's all I waited to see. Gammon had an appointment with him at eight. He ought to show up pretty soon. Then we'll know how the cat is going to jump."

"Do you think the dicks have got any line on me?" questioned Hogan apprehensively.

"How can they have any line on you?" Floyd returned, with a growl. "You was in disguise and you had a rented limousine with a phony number! There's no way that they can have picked up a line on you."

"Begad, I hope not."

"You stand well as a taxi driver," Floyd added. "You've as safe from suspicion as a preacher. That's why I had the infernal live stock brought here."

"You're right, mebbe."

"I know I'm right," Floyd asserted confidently.

"I can see where you'll get the surprise of your life a little later," said Patsy Garvan to himself.

"But when do we get the coin? That's what I want to know," vouchsafed the Devoll girl, most expressively. "I've gone into this blindly, as Nan has, on your word, Floyd, and——"

"Oh, I've got that all fixed," Floyd interrupted. "That's what Gammon is after to-night."

"Well, I hope he gets it."

"He knows I won't turn down the man until I'm dead sure of the coin. I'm not taking that kind of a chance. The rest of the job cut no great ice and was easily done, but putting out a man's light—that's a different matter."

"I should say so," frowned Lucy.

"If the coin is ready for us——"

"Easy!"

"That must be Gammon."

Patsy heard the ringing of the doorbell—three times

The corpulent woman, Hogan's wife, hastened out to open the front door.

Patsy clung to his board, watching constantly, listening intently, but he began to feel the strain of his awkward and perilous position. He scarce dared to stir, lest the board should slip from one end, or the other, and his distress was each moment becoming more painful.

"I'll hang on, by thunder, till I learn the whole business," he muttered, gritting his teeth. "I'll land this bunch, too, or know the reason why."

Less than a minute had passed when Mrs. Hogan returned to the kitchen. She was closely followed by Baldy Gammon, and Patsy Garvan saw the English crook for the first time.

He knew nothing about him, of course, nor about the first interview Nick had had with Sir Edward Chadwick, and much that he had heard was almost Greek to the determined young detective. Hence, his resolution to get all that could be obtained.

Stuart Floyd sprang up with an inquiring stare when Gammon entered, but the latter said quickly, with a sharp glance at the several other occupants of the room:

"Gimme a word with you alone, Floyd. It's as 'ow I 'ave somethink to tell you."

"What about?"

"You know. Come into the front room," Gammon insisted.

Stuart Floyd followed him without replying.

Hogan frowned darkly, and Lucy Devoll stole to the kitchen door to listen.

Patsy rightly reasoned that Floyd and Gammon were the two responsible for the active work of abducting Waldemere, and that the others were merely in their employ. He wondered, too, of course, to what Englishman they had referred.

"Gee! I wish they had done their talking there," he said to himself during the lull in the kitchen. "This may leave me dead lame as to the exact truth—as lame as I'll be after lying so long on this board. It's like being on a rack."

Patsy had not long to wait, however, before Gammon returned to the kitchen. Scarce ten minutes had passed, and the English crook then was followed by a man with silvery-gray hair and a flowing beard.

Patsy instantly recognized him, nevertheless.

"Great guns!" he exclaimed mentally. "What's on, now? Floyd is going out in disguise. Gee! had I better try to follow him?"

Floyd already had on his street garments, and brief consideration convinced Patsy that he could not possibly get down from his perilous perch in time to overtake him.

For Floyd lingered only to say a few words quietly to Hogan, and he then turned sharp on his heel and departed.

Gammon remained, however, and took the chair the other had vacated.

Floyd had gone, of course, to keep the appointment with Mr. Pimlico.

Lucy Devoll, frowning, began to question Gammon; and so sharp and insistent were her inquiries that he finally proceeded to tell them of the exact situation.

Patsy listened exultantly—but it was of brief duration.

The talk in the kitchen led up to Nan Levine's mission there, of which Baldy Gammon was ignorant. The moment he learned of the morning caller at the Ringold residence, however, he seemed to be inspired with suspicions that had entirely escaped Stuart Floyd, or been utterly ignored.

"'Ang it, girl, you may 'ave been followed 'ere!" he exclaimed, starting to his feet. "'Ow do you know you wasn't? What's out back 'ere? Let's 'ave a look?"

"Oh, there's nothing there," growled Hogan, laying down his pipe.

"'Ow do you know? Let's make sure of it, all the same. I'll see for my blooming self."

This sudden turn of affairs fell, of course, with alarming possibilities on the mind of Patsy Garvan, particularly when he saw the scowling ruffian striding toward the window on the sill of which the plank was resting.

"Gee! this is a case of sneak—if sneaking is possible," he muttered, in rising excitement. "It's a quick getaway for mine."

Patsy had begun to wriggle back on the board with his first thought. His muscles were stiff and cramped, however, and he could not move quickly, nor steadily.

Twice he felt the board slip treacherously on the stone sill of the window.

Then the curtain was raised high from within.

Baldy Gammon appeared at the window.

A blaze of light poured out upon Patsy, and he recoiled involuntarily.

That one slight move threw the board from the sill.

Patsy heard a roar from Gammon—but heard no more for several moments.

He fell through space as if out of an airship, turning while he fell, and in another instant he had crashed completely through the bulkhead door mentioned, and landed, stunned and bleeding, on the floor of the shop cellar.

CHAPTER IX.

THE LAST TRAIL.

There was a very good reason for Chick Carter's disappearance from the suite in which Nick had left him. The designs of the latter in leaving, after hearing with the dictograph the interview between Chadwick and Gammon, must be perfectly obvious. It was a simple thing for Nick to hasten home and return in a disguise such as Gammon had described.

Nick also had in mind, of course, to arrest the genuine Mr. Pimlico the moment he put in an appearance.

The instinctive caution of Stuart Floyd, however, when venturing out of haunts in which he felt comparatively safe, prevented this second design of Nick Carter, or briefly postponed and transferred it to another quarter, and also occasioned the sudden disappearance of Chick.

For Floyd did not take the elevator after entering the Oriental Hotel, nor did he enter the house through the front door. He came in through a side door, then stole up the stairs to the third floor, seeking the corridor and door to which Gammon had directed him.

He came so quietly that Chick Carter did not hear him until the rascal was nearly to the door of the Englishman's suite—and at the same moment Floyd caught sight of a slender wire glistening on the threshold.

There was no need to tell Stuart Floyd what it was, nor did he stop to learn whither it ran.

He turned like a flash and darted toward the main stairway of the hotel, down which he fled at top speed, tearing off his disguise while he sped down the stair and thrusting it into his pocket.

Chick Carter had caught sight of him, however, and instantly guessed the truth.

"He's wise, by thunder, and knows we're on his trail," flashed through Chick's mind. "But in getting him, I must get the others, also. I'll take the other course."

Chick did not stop to inform Nick what had occurred. He rushed to the side stairway at the end of the corridor, and flew down each flight at record speed, bent upon picking up Floyd when he emerged from the front of the house.

Though he came near being too late, his tremendous efforts proved successful. He caught sight of Floyd running across the avenue on which the house fronted, and then darting into a cross street leading toward the East Side.

"I'll get you now, by Jove," Chick muttered, with eyes alert. "If you give me the slip this night, you shall have a medal."

Floyd, seeming to feel reasonably safe when well away from the hotel, slowed down in order not to attract attention. Several times he looked back, however, but could discover no one following him.

Chick was steadily gaining on him, nevertheless, and before a block had been covered he met a policeman.

"Here, Grady, one moment," he said sharply.

The officer recognized him instantly, for Chick had removed his disguise.

"Oh, it's you, Mr. Carter," said he, touching his helmet.

"Yes," said Chick quickly. "I'm on the track of a crook, Stuart Floyd."

"The deuce you say!"

"I may need you and others to pull a gang. Follow me at a short distance and pick up help as you come along. Don't lose sight of me."

"Not on your life," said Grady, with eyes beginning to glow.

"Join me at once, if you see me wave my arm."

"I've got you, sir."

There had been only a momentary stop, and Chick had not for an instant lost sight of his man.

Floyd was fifty yards ahead of the detective, and on the opposite side of the street. He no longer was hurrying greatly. He seemed to feel that he had got safely away.

Chick crept on after him, steadily gaining.

Gray had a constant eye on Chick and cautiously followed him. Presently he picked up another policeman, and a moment later a plain-clothes man from the precinct station.

All followed Chick, hugging the buildings they were passing.

Five minutes later, Chick saw Floyd stop suddenly in front of an old wooden house. It was that in which Hogan dwelt with his wife.

Floyd, when about to enter, heard a terrible crash in the rear yard, and then a window thrown open and a roar from Baldy Gammon.

Instead of entering the house, Floyd rushed through the alley and into the little back yard.

Hogan and Gammon came tearing down a back stairway and joined him.

"What's wrong? What the devil's wrong?" Floyd demanded, yanking a search lamp from his pocket.

"A spy! A spy at that window," cried Hogan, pointing. "He's fell through this door and gone into the cellar."

Chick Carter, waving his arm, had to wait only thirty seconds for his three assistants to join him. He knew that he had rounded up his game.

"One of you watch this front door," he directed, in whispers. "The others follow me. Guns ready!"

Chick did not wait for an answer. He plunged through the alley, the policemen after him, and arrived in the yard, a veritable rat trap, just as Floyd switched on the electric light.

"Hands up!" Chick cried. "We've got you covered, Floyd. You, too, Gammon! You'll be dead ones if you show fight."

The policemen were not idle while Chick spoke. Both bored in upon the three cornered crooks, and Floyd and Gammon found themselves with revolvers at their heads.

Hogan uttered a groan and threw up his hands.

Patsy Garvan came crawling out of the cellar at the same moment, only a bit bruised by his fall. He also had a gun in his hand—and that settled it.

The arrest of the entire gang was easily made, and thirty minutes saw all except Sir Edward Chadwick locked in the precinct station. Word then was sent to Nick, who then turned his man over to the police, and the case was practically ended.

For Lord Archie Waldmere was found confined in an ice box in the Hogan cellar, not much the worse for his distressful experience, he having been lured away and overcome precisely as Nick had deduced from the surrounding circumstances.

It would be vain to attempt describing his gratitude to the Carters, as well as that of his wife, or the amazement with which he learned of the treachery of his uncle and the altered sentiments of his dying father. It opened the way for him to a new life in England, or to a renewal of the old, and he took it later with the willing consent of Lady Waldmere.

But neither ever forgot the Carters, or failed to visit them when in the States.

Stuart Floyd went back to prison and died there six months later.

Others engaged in the conspiracy were punished in accord with the law, and are behind prison bars to this day.

THE END.

"The Edge of a Crime; or, Nick Carter's Trail of Mercy," will be the title of the long, complete story which will be found in the next issue, No. 142, of the NICK CARTER STORIES, out May 29th. You will also find the usual interesting serial, short stories, and useful bits of information.

Where's the Commandant?

By C. C. WADDELL.

(This interesting story was commenced in No. 140 of NICK CARTER STORIES. Back numbers can always be obtained from your news dealer or the publishers.)

CHAPTER V.

THE SEVERED ROPES.

It was eight a. m. by the time Grail reached the fort, for he had stopped on the way to submit to a chemist an envelope containing the remnants of the decoy message. The chemist agreed with him thoroughly that its disintegration must have been accomplished by means of chemicals. He thought a mixture of certain acids, drying into the fiber of the paper, would cause it rapidly to disintegrate and crumble to dust, although he declined to commit himself definitely on the point until he had made a complete analysis.

His theory, however, was all that Grail really cared for, since it showed him that he was on the right track, and that the destruction of the note was due to no accident or mischance, but was part of a deliberate and premeditated plan—an incident to be duly reckoned with in any investigation of the colonel's disappearance.

Too thoroughly did he recognize his own limitations even to consider the task of handling the business in person. But how was he to secure the aid he required at the fort? If the army post has ramparts of privacy against the world, there is little going on inside which does not become generally known, and Grail had no sooner set foot on the reservation than he sensed the same feeling of hostility and suspicion which had manifested itself in the manner of the officers who met him at the foundry the night before.

The challenge of the sentinel on post, the side glances of the enlisted men, even the stiff salute of his own orderly, gave him to understand that he was ostracized—under the ban as much in barracks as along officers' row. There was no open disrespect shown, but the very air was full of a silent disapproval. He evidently had not a friend in the place—no one upon whom he could call for help.

Outwardly calm, but inwardly raging at the injustice, he turned in at headquarters—he would have starved rather than go over to the mess for breakfast—and, in order to conceal his perturbation, buried himself in the morning papers.

Staring fixedly at the headlines in the Brantford *Bee*, although unconscious of a word, he was roused from his abstraction by a slight cough, and glanced up, to find standing in front of him Sergeant Cato, the relief telegraph operator, and a decidedly superior type of non-com. Indeed, Cato had ambitions toward wearing shoulder straps for himself, and had been materially aided by Grail in his preparation for the necessary examination.

There was no recognition of this now, however, in the stiff, distant salute which he gave his superior:

"The list of messages sent out during the night, sir," he said.

Evidently, thought Grail, he was only to be addressed in the strict line of official duty. Even this man whom he had befriended reflected in his manner the general uncompromising spirit.

Perfunctorily the adjutant took the slip handed him, and glanced at it. Then he gave a quick start.

"To Miss Vedant, at Chicago!" he exclaimed, forgetting his determination to be as stiffly military himself as any one accosting him. "And sent by Major Appleby at two o'clock! Do you mean to say, Cato, that——"

The sergeant gave a slight sigh of relief, and noticeably unbent.

"Yes, sir," he returned. "It was to inform her of her father's disappearance. I thought myself it was a mistake to frighten her, when the thing'll probably be cleared up before she can get here; but the message was handed me for transmission, and what could I do?"

"So you expect the affair to be cleared up before Miss Vedant arrives, eh?" Grail asked. "What makes you say that, sergeant?"

Cato flushed a trifle. "Well, sir, if I may make so bold, it's because I am banking on you."

"Me?"

"Yes, sir." He shifted his feet uneasily. "Excuse me, captain, if I go too far; but it is a cinch, to my mind, that you'll never rest easy under this talk that's going around."

"You mean that there is a rumor that I am in some way responsible for Colonel Vedant's disappearance?"

Cato nodded. "That was what made me so sure the thing would be straightened out," he explained. "I knew you'd move heaven and earth before you'd let a charge like that stand against you."

Grail was silent a moment. "Is the fact of the colonel's disappearance pretty generally known among the men, sergeant?" he asked finally.

The other gave a significant shrug of the shoulders. "It's the only thing they're talking about over in the barracks, sir."

"And do many of them believe this gossip connecting my name with it?"

Cato's reluctance to answer was more eloquent than words. "You know what a bunch like that is, sir," he said apologetically. "Let somebody tell 'em St. Peter is a crook, and they'll be proving it to you in five minutes. That's what made be a bit standoffish when I came in just now, captain. I knew you couldn't help but be wise to the way the post is feeling, and I didn't want to seem to be handing you out any sympathy."

An incredulous look flashed into the adjutant's face, and he bent quickly forward. "Am I to understand, then, sergeant, that you do not entertain the same unfavorable opinion of me as the others?"

"Me, sir!" Cato's tone was one of surprise. "What kind of a soft-brained pup do you think I am, sir? You sell out to Japanese spies, and make away with the old man? Why, Captain Grail, if you told me yourself that you'd done it, I wouldn't believe you—no, not if you swore to it! It's because I'm certain of your innocence, captain, that I've been so positive the colonel would be found. Foolish as the charge is, you've got to disprove it for your own sake; and, with that sort of a proposition facing you, I knew you would manage to do it somehow. I only wish," he added, "that I could be of some help to you."

The adjutant turned sharply about at the suggestion. Quick-witted, discreet, diplomatic, and, above all, devoted to his cause, here was the very helper for whom he had been seeking.

"Help me!" He sprang to his feet. "You can, sergeant. You can help me enormously. Are you willing to put in a day or two of scout work for me, following up what may seem to be a series of absurd and irrelevant investigations, but asking no questions until you are through, or until I see fit to enlighten you as to my purpose?"

"Try me!" said Cato, drawing himself up.

Grail studied for a moment the eager face of the young noncom in front of him; then nodded his satisfaction.

"Good!" He drew from his pocket the stump of the cigarette he had found outside Schilder's office door, and showed it to the other. "You will notice," he said, "that this is an imported cigarette, not likely to be found in the average tobacco shop. What I want you to do, therefore, is to go, unostentatiously, through the saloons and small stationery stands down on the river front, in the neighborhood of the Dolliver Foundry, and find out for me, if possible, just where cigarettes of this kind are kept in stock, and, if possible, learn the names of the customers who have asked for them."

The sergeant signified his comprehension. "And what else, sir?" he asked, handing back the cigarette after a careful examination.

"I fancy," Grail said, "that you will find your work pretty well cut out for you along that one line. Still, you may have luck; and, in that case, I would like to have you find out about a motor boat which arrived yesterday, consigned to Otto Schilder."

"You will want me to use a disguise of some kind in making my inquiries, I suppose, sir?"

"Provided the disguise doesn't make you too conspicuous—yes," the adjutant assented. "That was a point, however, that I intended leaving largely to your own judgment. As a suggestion, though, it might be well, if you could manage it, to play the part of a foreigner seeking a job at the foundry—say, a Russian or a Pole."

"I think I can manage it," Cato returned. "Why, captain, taking off that Russky dialect is my strong specialty. I used to work at a rolling mill at Portsmouth, Ohio, where there was a whole bunch of them." And, to illustrate his powers, he dropped into an imitation which left no doubt in Grail's mind as to his ability to make good.

Accordingly, after a little further discussion, the sergeant started off on his mission, while Grail, feeling as though a load had been removed from his shoulders, hurried out to give orders for the inflation of the dirigible balloon which formed a part of the equipment of the post. He was the most enthusiastic aviator among the officers, and was regularly permitted to take out the dirigible without going through the form of making official application.

No one asked him the purpose or object he had in view. Silently, and with eyes averted, the men obeyed his orders; and the officers all kept distinctly aloof, although usually when there was a flight to be undertaken a crowd was very quick to gather.

"Never mind," Grail said to himself. "By to-morrow, if all goes well, the tide will have turned, and they'll be only too anxious to hear what I have to say."

The preparations completed, he climbed into the light framework under the big, swaying bag, and was just about to give the order "Let go!" when, casting a final glance about, he chanced to observe that two of the cords which held up the car were badly frayed. Had a flight been attempted with them in that condition there could hardly have failed to be a serious accident.

Stopping his engine, Grail sprang to the ground, and faced the little squad of men who had been helping him make ready.

"This machine was in perfect condition when it was brought out of the hangar," he remarked to them grimly, as he pointed to the almost severed ropes. "Consequently one of you must be responsible for this damage."

Then, as they hesitated, glancing uncertainly at one another, he took a quick step forward, and caught up a sharp fragment of broken glass which one of them—a new recruit by the name of Simmons—had attempted to drop behind him.

"Ah!" he cried triumphantly. "I thought I would be able to smoke out the culprit. Now we will have the corporal of the guard."

He held the offender in a close grip until the corporal he summoned arrived; then turned him over, with an injunction that he be held in close confinement, and permitted to speak to no one, or send out any word, until his own return.

Presently the weakened cords were replaced with new ones, under his instructions, and everything was again in readiness for the flight.

It may seem strange that Grail did not immediately follow up so serious an affair; but, as a matter of fact, he was so perturbed and puzzled by the dastardly attempt on his life that he wanted a little time for reflection. Was it merely the crazy freak of a simple-minded "rookie," or did the incident hold a deeper and more sinister significance? Could it be a further development of the plot which had already resulted in the colonel's disappearance, and was Simmons merely a tool in the hands of the secret conspirators?

Revolving these questions and many others in his mind, he gave the word to cut loose, and a moment later he was hovering high up in the air above the grassy parade ground. He turned the nose of his craft due east, and, with his propeller whirring, flew away toward the river's long, crescentlike curve around the town.

The dirigible from Fort Denton was not an unusual sight aloft, and consequently attracted but little attention from the people of the city; but out at the post Grail's flight was watched with curious interest. Officers and men alike, although pretending indifference, laid aside their duties to follow, with eager gaze, the evolutions of the airship. They gained but little for their pains, however. Out over the line of smoky chimneys marking the water front they saw him go; then sail in a straight line across the river, where he turned to the south, and, having executed a couple of wide circles over the wilderness like bottoms below the town, headed back for home. But as to his purpose they gathered not the slightest intimation.

At that distance they could not discern that as he swept above the weed-grown, bush-covered lowlands so frequently subject to overflow, he leaned over in the car, and studied with the eye of the skilled topographer every feature of the country beneath him.

Upon a tumble-down shack in a clump of stunted willows his gaze lingered longest, and as he estimated its distance from the river, as well as from the few other habitations which dotted the waste acres, his eye showed a glint of satisfaction. Unwilling, however, to reveal by his movements the nature of the survey he was making to any

possible watcher, he did not hang long over the spot, or descend for a closer view, but contented himself with two rounds, at high altitude, as already described, and beat back westward toward the fort.

With the wind against him, his return trip consumed more time than the outgoing one, and it was well after noon when he finally effected a skillful descent to the parade ground. He had been absent from the post altogether a little over two hours.

"Has Sergeant Cato returned yet?" was the first question he asked as he sprang from the car; but, receiving a sullen negative for answer, bent his steps, as soon as he had seen the dirigible safely put away, toward the guardhouse.

There he found himself confronted by Lieutenant Hemingway, who happened to be acting as officer of the day. The younger man's eyes fell, and he showed his embarrassment by blushing painfully; but Grail was cool and steady as a statue.

"I wish to speak to Private Simmons, placed under arrest by my orders," he said brusquely.

"Simmons?" Hemingway spoke rather superciliously. "Oh, yes—the man brought in from the balloon squad. Why, he isn't here. I heard that there was only a slight disorderly charge against him, and I let him go to his quarters."

"You *heard!*" repeated Grail icily. "Didn't you know the nature of the accusation against him?"

The other manifested a shade of anxiety. "Why—er—no," he stammered. "I was not here, you see, when the fellow was brought in, and just as I returned both the corporal and sergeant were called out by a fight over at barracks."

"And you did not consult the book before taking this step?"

"No," Hemingway was obliged to confess. To tell the truth, he had deemed it rather smart to set at liberty one whom he supposed to be merely a victim of the adjutant's ill humor; but now doubts began to assail him.

Hastily he caught up the record of offenders for the day, and noted the charge uttered opposite the name of Simmons; then fell back, with a little gasp.

"Attempted murder!" he exclaimed. "Here, corporal! Sergeant! Somebody! Hustle over to barracks, and bring back that man Simmons we had here a while ago."

But, as might have been expected, the bird had flown; and, although a squad was instantly ordered out to search the city for him, and the police were put upon the case, both Hemingway and Grail knew that with so much of a start the chances of catching him were very slim indeed.

The culpable lieutenant, court-martial staring him in the face, started to stammer some wild excuses; but Grail merely turned on his heel, and marched off to his quarters. He had scored heavily over one of his enemies, but he gathered little gratification from the fact. He would have preferred a chance to question Simmons.

CHAPTER VI.

THE HAPPIEST GIRL.

Under the circumstances, there seemed to be nothing for Grail to do but await with what patience he could muster the return of Sergeant Cato; and as the afternoon slipped away with no report from the latter, he threw himself on a couch in the office at headquarters and presently drifted off into a doze. Worn out by his exertions, the strain he had been under, and his loss of sleep the night before, he was soon wrapped in a profound slumber; and, as nothing happened to disturb him, five o'clock still found him sleeping heavily.

Meanwhile, the train from Chicago, bearing the distressed daughter of the commandant, had arrived, and Major Appleby, who had gone down to meet her, could only return a gloomy shake of the head to the unspoken question of her wide, trouble-filled eyes.

"Don't ask me anything now, my dear," he said, in a low tone. "We are trying to keep the matter quiet for the present, and you can't tell who might overhear us in this crowd. As soon as we get outside, though, you shall learn all there is to know. Mrs. Schilder is waiting for us in her car, and wants to take you to her home."

"Mrs. Schilder?" The girl's lips parted in a little gasp of surprise, for she had only a very slight acquaintance with the wife of the foundry manager.

"Yes," the major explained. "Mrs. Appleby and I would have been delighted to have you with us, but it seemed preferable that you should not be at the fort, where you would be kept constantly upset by all sorts of unfounded rumors. So, as Mrs. Schilder pointed out that you would probably be more comfortable in her home than anywhere else, we accepted her invitation on your behalf."

Miss Vedant hesitated a moment, then gave a slight shrug, as though to signify that it was a matter of indifference to her. Troubled and shaken as she was, she was in no mood to protest against any arrangement they might have made, and, anyway, it was too late now to draw back without seeming ungracious, for the major, by this time, was conducting her out through the tall, pillared entrance of the station, and she saw, a few steps away across the plaza, Mrs. Schilder waiting for them in the automobile.

Mrs. Schilder, modishly gowned, and undeniably beautiful, in a dark, foreign style, greeted the girl with just the proper touch of sympathetic restraint to put Meredith at her ease.

"I don't want you to think me unduly urgent in this matter, my dear," she said, "but I could not help feeling that if I were in your place I should want to be among friends who understood the situation. You must not regard yourself as a guest with us, either; you are to consider yourself at home, and do in all things just as you choose. At any rate," she added, with a reassuring pressure of the hand, "give me the happiness of having you with me until your father is restored, which must certainly be within a few hours."

Meredith glanced up eagerly. "You believe that?" she exclaimed, then turned as if for corroboration to Major Appleby, who sat with them in the tonneau.

The major cleared his throat. "We are at least very close on the trail of the Japanese spies who are undoubtedly responsible for the outrage," he assented guardedly. "For a time we were at sea, thinking they had fled the city, but through a hint astutely obtained by Mrs. Schilder—he bowed pompously toward that lady—"from her butler, who is also a Japanese, we are now confident that they are still in Brantford, and, therefore, with the efforts we are making, must be run to earth in very short time."

"Japanese spies?" Meredith repeated. "So that is what is back of the affair? Remember, I know nothing except

what was contained in your telegram. Please tell me all the circumstances," she pleaded.

The major started to comply, with a labored, heavy account, but Mrs. Schilder tactfully interposed, and, taking the recital into her own hands, told in a few words the story of the occurrences at the foundry the night before.

"But why are Japanese spies suspected?" The girl's brows wrinkled into a little frown. "I see nothing in all this to indicate such a theory. Did Captain Grail see any Japanese around?"

"He did not say so," stiffly responded the major. "To tell you the truth, my dear, Captain Grail, beyond giving a bare account of the incident, declined to commit himself in any way, or even to confer with the other officers of the post over measures looking toward your father's recovery."

The girl stared at him almost incredulously. "Yet he must know more of what happened than anybody else," she cried. A wave of hot indignation swept over her face at the thought that an officer so closely associated with her father could from any cause show indifference at such a crisis.

Involuntarily she drew back, with a hand on Mrs. Schilder's arm. "Would you mind taking me out to the fort before we go to your house? I must see Captain Grail myself, and question him—now, at once. I cannot understand what he means by such an attitude."

The major endeavored to dissuade her. "I doubt if it would do you any good," he urged. Then, hesitating, he excused himself to Mrs. Schilder, and leaned over to whisper: "If you must know, my dear, Grail is not popular at the fort just now. We have, in short, excellent reasons to believe that he himself is implicated in the colonel's disappearance."

Involuntarily she drew back, with a little cry of unbelief. "Impossible!" she declared. "You cannot realize what you are saying, major!"

"I not only realize, but reiterate it," he said solemnly. "More than that, I have stated the case mildly to you, for we have evidence to prove that his was the crafty brain which hatched up this whole so-called mystery. Now, I am sure, you will see the futility of attempting to gain any information from him."

"No." She shook her head. "If what you say is true, then I think there is more reason than ever that I should see Captain Grail."

With an air of determination, she leaned once more toward Mrs. Schilder, who had discreetly turned her eyes away during the colloquy, and was gazing out over the side of the car. "I am afraid the major must consider me very self-willed," she said, "but I am going to ask you again if I may not be driven to the post?"

Her hostess immediately bent forward to give the desired order to the chauffeur, and, despite Appleby's fuming, the car was whirled around and headed for the new destination. Back down Carney Street they sped, past the courthouse and city hall, and finally reached the fort.

Inquiry having developed that Grail was in his office at headquarters, the major, with an air of stern virtue, prepared to conduct Meredith to him; but again Mrs. Schilder suavely interposed.

"Perhaps Miss Vedant would prefer to see the adjutant alone," she said, laying a detaining hand on Appleby's arm.

Meredith gave her a quick glance of gratitude, and assuring them both that she needed no one with her during the interview, hurried on through the door.

A moment later Grail was awakened by the announcement, "A lady to see you, sir," and he rose up, blinking and confused, to find her standing before him.

"You?" he cried in amazement, for he had never dreamed that Appleby and the crowd would permit her to come near such a pariah as himself. "You, Meredith!"

Ormsby Grail had dreamed dreams centering about this fair-haired, slender daughter of his colonel. He had seen her blossom from the child he had once taken on his knee into a charming woman, and learned to love her. But he had refrained from whispering any word of his love to her. She was too young, he told himself; she could not possibly know her own mind. Even when it was decided that she should go to Chicago for a year to cultivate her remarkable voice, he still had not ventured to speak. He would wait a little longer, he decided. She seemed to him no more than a child.

So, although he wrote to her frequently, in a friendly, brotherly sort of fashion, and never let a week go by without some remembrance from him, he sedulously concealed from her the real state of his feelings—or thought he did—and never dared visit her in Chicago.

Half extending his arms, he took a hasty step toward her, then halted abruptly, the recollection sweeping over him of what she must have heard.

"You wished to see me?" he asked, in a controlled voice.

"Yes." Her glance met his steadily, although she was somewhat nervously twisting her hands in their brown suède gloves. "I want to ask you about father."

"Haven't the others told you?" he inquired. Then, as she nodded, he added, with a touch of defiance: "I suppose you have heard, too, what they are saying about me?"

"I have heard."

"And do you believe it?"

"If I believed part of it," she said, "I would be the happiest girl in the world!"

CHAPTER VII.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS.

Grail stared at the girl in bewilderment as she repeated: "Yes, the happiest girl in the world. For if I thought you were responsible for his disappearance, as they say, I should know that no harm could possibly have befallen him. It is because I am certain of your innocence that I am apprehensive; and it is because I know you must be moving heaven and earth in the effort to find him that I have come to ask you what you have discovered. What faith can I put in Major Appleby's promises"—she gave a deprecating gesture—"when I see how he is bungling things? But, surely, you can tell me whether or not there is any real ground for hope?"

A great flash of joy and wonder lighted Grail's face. "Meredith," he cried huskily, "I never expected to feel so proud in all my life! You don't know what your trust and confidence mean to me!"

Then, afraid that if he said more, he might say too much, he placed a chair for her and drew up one for himself.

"More than that," he went on; "I am going to prove to you that your faith is not misplaced. Take my word for it, your father shall be restored to you within a very short time; before to-morrow morning, unless I am very much mistaken."

Never yet, in their long acquaintance, had Grail failed to make good a promise to her, and his assurance now brought a sigh of genuine relief to her lips and a smile to her pale, anxious face.

"Ah!" she exclaimed. "You mean that the running down of these Japanese spies must result in disclosing father's whereabouts?"

"Japanese spies!" His lips curled contemptuously. "They exist only in the imagination of Appleby and Hemingway."

"Precisely what I thought, too, when the major told me," she said. "I know, of course, that all the foreign nations keep secret agents hanging around our forts and army posts, just as we do around theirs; but that any of these men would go to such lengths struck me, on the face of it, as ridiculous."

"There you are wrong," Grail returned. "Ordinarily, I grant, you would be right; but the colonel's present series of experiments being concerned with a new and surprising development in the use of the wireless in warfare, has stirred these fellows up to a pitch where they have been ready to dare almost anything. Besides, the chap who, I am convinced, engineered this deal——" He caught himself just as he was on the verge of revealing to her the point which had caused him most concern in the affair.

Dexterously he extricated himself from the situation by knocking a book from the desk with his elbow and stooping over to regain it.

"As I was about to say," he resumed, "the chap who engineered this deal was not a Japanese, but of a nation which furnishes spies of an even more bold and subtle character."

He drew from his pocket the half-smoked cigarette which formed his principal clew.

"Are you sufficiently versed in such things to tell me of what make this is?" he asked.

"Russian," she replied, without a moment's hesitation. "The little countess we used to know in Washington, you remember, smoked cigarettes exactly like that."

"Exactly," he said, "and the man for whom we have got to look in this case is a Russian."

A thoughtful look came into Meredith's eyes. "Dad was in Russia once, on secret-service business himself," she said; "and although they would never tell me about it, mother confessed to me on one occasion that for a long time she had been fearful of an attempt at revenge upon him, for something that happened while he was on the mission. You don't suppose, do you, that this could in any way be an outcome of that old affair?"

"Absurd!" he answered. "Why, it was almost twenty years ago that your father was over there. If there was anything coming to him on that score, I fancy he would have been called to account long before this."

Then he deftly turned the subject to a discusssion of the facts from which he had built up the hypothesis he was following.

"I had been on the lookout for a Russian spy, you see," he explained, "for I had been tipped off by Sasaku, one of the dining-room boys, who is rather attached to me, that a fellow he had once seen chased out of Tokyo was here in Brantford, showing considerable interest in doings at the fort. Accordingly, I framed it up with Sasaku to get in with the chap, on the plea of being a 'gumshoe man' himself, desirous of working to mutual advantage, and gave him yesterday a bundle of fake papers to fool the other with, and get him to divulge his name and his business.

"That," he added disdainfully, "is the sole basis for the 'Japanese spy' story you have heard. And, by the way" —he glanced with a frown at his watch—"I ought to have heard from Sasaku before this. He promised to send me a communication at the very first opportunity."

"But where does the cigarette come in?" Meredith asked, a trifle impatiently.

"The cigarette? Oh, that was the connecting link. It is really the corner stone to my entire theory; for although I very quickly decided that the gumshoe artists were at the bottom of the job, I was, at first, rather inclined to suspect Otto Schilder as the moving spirit. It seemed pretty crude work for one of the kaiser's men, I will admit; but there was no one else handy to lay it to, and as a German he was, of course, open to question. The discovery of the cigarette outside the office door, however, cleared things up amazingly. I recollected a glint of light that had been flash across the doorway when the current was cut off, and, by putting two and two together, it didn't take me long to figure out just about what had happened. The telltale spark I saw traversed the aperture of the doorway from top to bottom; consequently, the cigarette must have fallen or been dropped from above. Had the smoker been on the roof, then? And was it possible that the colonel, seized and muffled as he stood on the threshold, had been hauled up there by a rope? An electric crane, though, with its long arm sweeping silently over the yard, and lifting scrap iron across the fence to be loaded on cars outside, gave me a more plausible idea."

"But if you knew so much," Meredith interrupted, "why did you not at once denounce these men?"

"With what proof?" asked Grail. "Remember, some little time had elapsed before I got this theory, and to identify the guilty men in that large force of laborers would then have been practically impossible. Besides, all the evidence I had to present was this cigarette butt; and, although it was perfectly plain to me that it had been tossed away by one of the men in the basket of the crane just before grabbing the colonel, I might have had difficulty in getting others to see it in the same light. No, no! To have shown my hand at that stage would have been simply to tip all the fat into the fire."

"But what of father?" exclaimed Miss Verdant sharply. "Is no effort being made to find him, or learn what has become of him?"

"Assuredly," Grail hastened to appease her. "That is, of course, the object to which everything else must be subservient. Trust me, Meredith. Take my word for it that your father is safe and sound, and will be with you by this time to-morrow night."

"Is that 'orders'?" she asked, in playful allusion to an old joke between them, although her lip quivered as she tried to smile.

"That's 'orders,'" assented Ormsby firmly, "and I want you to be enough of a soldier's daughter to obey them. You are all broken up by this thing, and worn out by your trip, as well. What you've got to do now is to take some rest, and quit worrying. Come! I'll take you over to Major Appleby's house. I suppose you are stopping there?"

"No," she explained. "I am to be with Mrs. Schilder, I believe."

Grail looked up sharply, and seemed on the point of saying something, but reconsidered the impulse.

"You don't need to tell me to trust you, captain." She extended her hand. "Indeed, if it were not for my reliance on you, I don't know what I should do."

The adjutant, choking back words that rose tumultuously to his lips, escorted her to the door; then paused, with an involuntary exclamation, to stare at the group of officers gathered about Mrs. Schilder's car, excitedly discussing an evening paper which one of them had just brought in.

Its flaring black headlines were plainly discernible to Grail, and in a flash he read that his little Japanese friend and ally, Sasaku, had been murdered in the city.

TO BE CONTINUED.

"I CROW."

Many a "star" might well envy the most insignificant member of her troupe the supreme sense of importance and satisfaction with which he performs his little duty, be it only that of blowing out the candle through the hole in the scenery when the hero aims his deadly rifle at the flame and the cap explodes.

Think of the pleasure his performance accorded this small boy, for instance:

"First Boy—"You ought to come to the concert our music teacher is goin' to give."

Second Boy—"You goin' to be in?"

"Yes. I am one of the primmer donnas. We are goin' to give a cantata."

"Wot's that?"

"Oh, it's all about sunshine and storms and picnics and all sorts of country things. It's great."

"Do you sing all that?"

"N-o. I'm only in the first scene: 'Early mornin' on the farm.'"

"What do you do?"

"I crow."

THE WRONG PASSENGER.

One may, perhaps, presume so far upon old acquaintanceship as to indulge occasionally in a mild, practical joke, but to attempt familiarity with strangers is "another kind of game."

A city street arab was wont to play rather roughly with a good-natured bulldog, owned by a shopkeeper of the neighborhood. One day the boy was walking with a friend when he saw the dog approaching.

"Hi! there's Towse!" he cried. "Now see me scare him!"

He stepped in front of the dog, with arms extended, and partially blocked the passage. The animal looked surprised, stopped, and evidently considered within himself what it would be best to do.

"I never knew him to act like that," said the joker. "He always lies down on his back and rolls. I'll stir him up a little."

With that he sprang at the dog and caught him by the ears.

Towse was evidently amazed, but he proved equal to the occasion. Fastening his teeth in the boy's trousers, in startling nearness to an expanse of bare knee, he held on like a vise.

Just at that moment the boy caught sight of an unfamiliar spot of white on the animal's head, and dropped his hold to take at once to his heels, leaving a goodly portion of woolen cloth in the creature's mouth.

"Run, Patsy, run!" he shouted to his chum. "He's gone and turned hisself into another dog!"

HOW LONG IS FIVE MINUTES?

In a murder trial before a court in the West, the prisoner was able to account for the whole of his time, except five minutes, on the evening when the crime was committed. His counsel argued that it was impossible for him to have killed the man, under the circumstances, in so brief a period, and on that plea largely based his defense, the other testimony being strongly against his client. When the prosecuting attorney replied, he said:

"How long a time really is five minutes? Let us see. Will his honor command absolute silence in the courtroom for that space?"

The judge graciously complied. There was a clock on the wall. Every eye in the courtroom was fixed upon it, as the pendulum ticked off the seconds. There was breathless silence. The keen-witted counsel waited until the tired audience gave a sigh of relief at the close of the period, and then asked quietly:

"Could he not have struck one fatal blow in all that time?"

The prisoner was found guilty, and, as it was proved afterward, justly.

DON'T SNUB THE BOYS.

Don't snub a boy because he wears shabby clothes. When Edison, the great inventor, first entered Boston, he wore a pair of yellow linen breeches in the depth of winter.

Don't snub a boy because his home is plain and unpretending. Abraham Lincoln's early home was a log cabin.

Don't snub a boy because he chooses a humble trade. The author of "Pilgrim's Progress" was a tinker.

Don't snub a boy because of physical disability. Milton was blind, and Cato was deaf.

Don't snub a boy because he seems dull or stupid. Hogarth, the celebrated painter and engraver, was slow at learning, and did not develop as soon as some boys.

Don't snub a boy because he stutters. Demosthenes, the greatest orator of Greece, overcame a harsh and stammering voice.

Don't snub any one; not alone because some day he may outstrip you in the race of life, but because it is neither kind nor Christian.

KEEPING THEM DOWN.

Rich Youth—"I should not object to the work of earning my own living if I had to, but what I should hate would be the officiousness and petty tyranny of superiors. I should hate to have to bow to the whims of some wealthy man not a bit better than myself."

Poor Youth—"That's easily avoided. Be a typewriter, as I am. Employers never put on airs over me. I know how to take the starch out of 'em."

"Eh? What do you do?"

"Ask 'em to spell a hard word now and then."

THE NEWS OF ALL NATIONS.

Blames Cat for Loss of Ship.

Captain Roland F. Quillen, of Bethel, Va., whose three-masted schooner *William J. Quillen* was sunk off Cape Hatteras after a collision with the Norwegian steamship *Laly*, never again will take a cat to sea. He attributes the accident, which nearly cost his life and the lives of his crew, to a gray cat which he had aboard.

"I've shipped for twenty-five years and always have taken along dogs," Captain Quillen said. "Just before I started from Baltimore for Mayport, Fla., somebody stole my dog. So I got a cat—a gray cat. Cats are bad luck, I guess. This was my first accident. The cat was lost."

Turn Funeral Coach into a "Tango Car."

The dead business is dead in Atlantic City, N. J. This is the conclusion of the management of the Atlantic City & Shore Fast Line after six months' experiment in specializing in the dying business.

A half year back they went to considerable expense to have a finely equipped trolley, twice the size of the ordinary cars, constructed to carry funeral parties to the cemetery on the mainland. At the expiration of the six months they found the car a dead loss.

Work was started at once to make it a paying proposition. It is being dismantled and will be transformed into a "tango car." The conveyance will have the central seats removed, a fine maple floor will be put down and waxed. Then it will be put in special service to carry gay parties to the country clubs on the mainland. They can tango their way over and back again; in fact, never stop tangoing from the time the car starts out from its station.

"There's more than one way of making ends meet," declare the officials.

Woman Buys a Large Dairy.

Mrs. Elsie Rothery, a Memphis woman, has bought and assumed active management of a large dairy farm near Natchez, Miss. She purchased the 300-acre farm on which the Natchez Creamery is located, together with a number of fine milk cows and the dairy equipment.

She intends to conduct a modern dairy on an extensive scale.

Noted Woman Detective, Mrs. M. E. Holland, Dies.

Mrs. M. E. Holland, who was called "America's greatest woman detective," died recently at her home in Chicago. She was forty-eight years old and had been ill for two weeks. She was recovering from an operation when pneumonia set in.

Mrs. Holland was editor of *The Detective*, official organ of the police authorities and sheriffs of the country. She was internationally known as a finger-print expert and had figured in some of the most important cases in the country. A number of years ago she was hired by the government to install in the secret-service bureau the finger-print system of identification.

She was a native of Galena, Ill., but had lived in Chicago many years. She had the largest private rogues' gallery in the world, and, with her former husband, was joint partner in a large police-equipment house. She owned personally a special make of handcuff and the patent right of the Oregon boot, an affair which superseded the ball-and-chain device, and was the patentee of a folding stretcher that has been adopted universally in police circles. Mrs. Holland was the only woman in the country holding honorary memberships in the associations of police chiefs and detective-bureau chiefs throughout the United States, and was a familiar figure at their conventions.

Mrs. Holland was divorced from her first husband and was married to Arthur McCarthy, a police sergeant, in January, 1914. She continued to work with her former husband, however, in publishing *The Detective*. Later she was divorced from McCarthy.

"Snooker" is New Pool Game.

There's a new game in New York called snooker. It is English pool, and is played on a table six feet wide and twelve feet long. The pockets at each corner and on the sides are smaller than those of the regulation pool table, and in proportion the balls are smaller.

Fifteen red balls are racked together at one end of the table. In back of the pyramid is a black ball that counts seven for you every time you succeed in putting it in the pocket. Directly in front of the apex of the pyramid is a pink ball that is valued at six points. In the center of the table is a blue, worth five, while at the opposite end of the table are a yellow, green, and brown ball, worth, two, three, and four points.

The game is played by shooting alternately at any of the other colored balls. When the fifteen red balls are pocketed, the remaining extra-point balls are played off in rotation. The penalties of the game are just about as numerous as the creditors on the trail of the man who is hard up. Snooker has resulted in putting the nose of one Mr. Kelly much out of joint.

Old Ma Wolf a Jealous Mother.

"All my sheep, gather in a heap, for I spy the woolly, woolly wolf," shouted an urchin standing in front of the wolf dens in the New York Zoological Park recently, when some of his playmates gathered in the park to watch the animals. The wolves he spied are Cherokee, Seneca, and Iroquois, latest arrivals in the prairie-wolf pack, and they are just as limber and wild as the Indians used to be on the plains of North Dakota, from which Minnehaha, the mother wolf, came to the park a few years ago.

Since the trio arrived, interest has centered about them more than any other attraction in the park. Their mother is insanely jealous of them and especially solicitous for their welfare.

Only by patient watching and waiting was it possible for Alexander Ferguson and Peter Romanoff, the keepers, to steal into the cage and snatch the puppies away from Minnehaha. The howl she set up was chorused by all the other wolves in the park, and this brought hundreds of persons running in the direction of the wolf dens.

Minnehaha was forgotten when the crowd discovered Miss Marcella Burke, secretary to Raymond L. Ditmars, curator of the New York Zoological Society, with Iroquois, Cherokee, and Seneca in her arms. The little ones did not like the idea of being taken out of the cage, but Miss Burke, who has handled a variety of animals in the course of her work—more perhaps than any other young woman, excepting those engaged in the circus business—petted the puppies and soon made them feel at home.

The children gathered around Miss Burke, and besought her to give them the little wolves. One chap said that he had a dog like Seneca, and another was certain that Cherokee was a spaniel and not a wolf at all, while still another exclaimed that Iroquois was neither a dog nor a wolf, but a cat. During the argument, Minnehaha never let up her high-pitched staccato cry, manifesting clearly that the puppies were neither dog nor cat, but hers at all hazards.

It was not until her offspring were returned to the cage that she ceased howling for them. Her coddling of the little ones kept the crowd amused for some time, and Minnehaha tenderly picked each one up by the slack of the neck and tucked them away in the cave. She snarled at the spectators and stood guard at the cave hole, ready to resent another intrusion.

Elephant Famine New Horror of War.

The European war has caused a shortage in elephants in this country, according to Ernest Siegfried, manager of Louis Ruhe's wild-animal farm at Woodside, N. Y. Yesterday he received a rush order for six elephants to be delivered at once to the Barnum & Bailey circus, but he was unable to fill it.

"The activity of the fleets of the Allies in stopping German commerce is responsible for this shortage," said Mr. Siegfried. "The importation of elephants has been carried on chiefly in the past by Germans through the port of Hamburg."

Mr. Siegfreid declared that his firm was fortunate in getting out of Germany, just before the war started, a considerable consignment of other wild animals, among the number being fourteen lions, two tigers, two leopards, three wolves, two polar bears, three brown Russian bears, three camels, and a number of deer and kangaroos.

While there is some demand for these animals, they cannot take the place of elephants, and there is a danger that some of the smaller circuses throughout the country will have to go through this season at least without their elephants.

Woman Routs Burglar.

A burglar climbed up to the window of the guest chamber in Judge John E. Keeler's house on Strawberry Hill, in Stamford, Conn., at four o'clock the other morning.

A New York woman whose name was withheld occupied the guest chamber. She awoke when the burglar had half of his body inside the open window, shoved him out of the window, and hurled the water pitcher after him. Then she became hysterical.

The burglar escaped.

Aged Ninety; Still a Sprinter.

David Anderson, of 33 Chestnut Street, Yonkers, N. Y., celebrated his ninetieth birthday by a little sprint around the block in which he lives. Anderson won a gold medal in a hundred-yard dash when he was seventy-four. He has an open challenge to any man not more than ten years his junior.

Americans in the Air Corps.

The formation of an American section in the French aviation corps has been completed by Norman Prince, of Boston, and soon will be in active service. It consists of seven pilots, who will fly a new type of 160-horse-power monoplane. Three of the seven American aviators have qualified for the military certificate at Pau. They are Norman Prince, William Thaw, of New York, and Andre Ruel, of Chicago. The others expected to pass the tests are Elliott C. Cowden, junior, of New York; James Bach, an American, living in Paris; B. Hall, of Texas, and Frazier Curtis, of Boston. Prince says that he needs a reserve of three pilots, at least. Beckwith Havens, winner of the Chicago-Detroit flying-boat cruise, may enlist.

Oddities of Ball Players.

The lamented "Bugs" Raymond, world-famous pitcher of the New York Giants and St. Louis Cardinals, always carried about him his pressmen's union card. It was always in his pocket on the ball field. Bugs was very proud of it, just as he should have been, for a finer bunch of lovers of true sport than the pressmen on newspapers never lived.

Larry Lajoie, the famous swatter, has a pair of rubber-soled canvas shoes. Those shoes were on his feet when he first played with the Fall River team. Lajoie never has parted with them. They have a special place in his suit case.

Frank Chance, when with the Chicago Cubs, used to seek four-leaved clovers. So does Hughey Jennings to this day.

Mysterious Message in Heart of Potato.

A great deal of interest and curiosity has been created in the vicinity of West Nashville, Tenn., by a message found in an Irish potato.

Mrs. Walter Lovell was preparing some potatoes for dinner when her knife struck something she thought was a cob, but on examination proved to be a heavy piece of brown paper, about a foot long and five inches wide, with the following writing on it:

"Peter Johnson, Edmore, Mich.; Harry Hansen, Edmore, Mich. Please answer."

This was written with an indelible pencil. The peeling of the potato was smooth, with no indication of a plug. The potato was unusually large, weighing about three pounds, and had grown firmly around the paper, leaving a cavity when it was removed.

As to how the paper was grown into the potato with no indications on the peeling remains a mystery.

Big Grizzley is Hotel Guest.

An unusual guest appeared recently at the Stewart Hotel, in San Francisco, when a huge grizzly bear, accompanied by Fred Thompson, his owner, and nature man Joe Knowles, waddled up to the desk and gravely went through the formalities of registering, giving his name as "Baby of the Rockies."

After a good feed on lumps of sugar, Baby, who weighs slightly over 500 pounds, took a trip up the elevator, which

he jammed on his way up. Arrived at the seventh floor, Baby and escort visited a party of women. The grizzly was captured by Thompson five years ago.

Four Legs Fatal to This Curious Chicken.

The town of Cheshire, Conn., has developed a chicken which ought to have been born in the days of Phineas T. Barnum, so that its praises could be properly expressed by the world's greatest showman and purveyor of natural and man-made wonders, more frequently the latter.

Joseph Wheeler, a prominent poultry raiser, found among a recently hatched Rhode Island Red brood a chicken perfectly formed except that it had four legs. All went well for nearly a week. Then it was discovered that the two sets of legs were arranged for locomotion in opposite directions. The result was that the chick pulled itself apart.

People from all over the countryside came to see it, and in death it has been turned over to a taxidermist.

How Ships Take Oil on Run.

The method of supplying vessels, especially battleships, with fuel oil at sea is remarkably simple when compared with that required for coaling. A tanker is run up to within about six hundred feet of the vessel needing oil, a tow line is attached, and a second line supports a hose through which the oil is pumped. Meanwhile the ships are steaming at an hourly speed of from ten to twelve knots. An automatic tension furnishes the necessary elastic medium for paying out and taking up the supporting cable, as required by motion of the vessel.

By this method it is possible to transport from the tanker to the vessel taking on the fuel nearly seven hundred barrels an hour.

Owes Life to Sleeping Dog.

A dog averted perhaps a fatal injury to its owner, J. H Adams, a farmer near Polo, Ill. He fell thirty feet from the haymow of his barn and alighted upon the dog, which was lying asleep. The dog was killed, but the man escaped.

Facts for You.

For the convenience of travelers, an English firm is compressing tea into blocks that resemble American plug tobacco.

After experimenting for thirty-two years, a New York man claims to have perfected a synthetic gold, made from copper and aluminium.

A French inventor's parachute can be guided in falling by pulling cords to draw in its sides.

Extensive deposits of iron ore have been discovered in Bavaria, the ore lying close to the surface of the ground.

In the last twenty years the per-capita consumption of paper in the United States has increased about six-fold.

Aluminium can be rolled into sheets one-two-thousandth of an inch in thickness that are as strong as tinfoil.

Charcoal made of peat and formed into briquettes has been used successfully for melting iron ore in England.

A new sanitary holder for tumblers is made of spring wire, so shaped as to touch the glass as little as possible.

To enable a man to walk on an inclined roof, spiked frames, to be strapped under the shoes, have been patented.

Experts from the United States Department of Agriculture are making an extensive study of the coconut industry in the Philippines.

To enable visitors to get a closer view of the whirlpool of Niagara Falls, a passenger-carrying cableway will be built across the river.

California possesses more than one-twelfth of the hydro-electric power development of the United States, about 450,000 horse power.

A violet-rays water-sterilizing apparatus invented in France automatically opens a valve and diverts the water into a drain if the rays should stop.

Experiments are under way with glass for spectacles intended to filter out the injurious rays of artificial light, leaving the effect of sunlight.

A new deepest hole in the earth is a well that has been bored in Silesia to a depth of 7,348 feet, 6,848 feet of which has been lined with iron tubing.

A New South Wales irrigation dam, which will cost $3,680,000, will impound 33,380,000,000 cubic feet of water, backed up in a lake forty miles long.

By authority of the Brazilian government, the railways of that country and Paraguay will be connected, providing another transcontinental line for South America.

For finding leaks in motor-cycle tires there has been invented a box to fit over them in compartments of which is cotton that is moved by the escaping air as it passes over a hole.

Raise Your Own Food.

Sufficient vegetables can be raised on a quarter-acre lot to supply a family of six persons for an entire year if close attention is given to the rotation and succession of crops, says the Federal Department of Agriculture. The same lot will accommodate such permanent crops as asparagus, rhubarb, and small fruits and berries, if care is taken in arranging the garden. It will provide fresh vegetables for the summer and enough for canning for use in the winter.

A smaller area, such as is found in the average city back yard, will accommodate several of the smaller crops, such as lettuce, peas, parsley, radishes, beets, and onions, all of which are in constant demand by the average housewife.

Pigeons Overrule Solomon.

According to an order of Judge Beall, in special sessions court, of Yonkers, N. Y., a flock of pigeons was permitted to determine ownership. The birds were in the cote of William Warholy, who asserted they belonged to him. John Yosko was also a claimant, charging the pigeons had been stolen from his cote.

Recalling that pigeons are credited with a wonderful instinct in finding their own roosts, Judge Beall ordered two policemen to release the pigeons in dispute and report the result.

One-half of the number of birds flew to Warholy's cote and the others to Yosko's cote, thereby reserving decision for the judge.

Garden Rake is Life-saver.

Jennie Reed, four-year-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs H. C. Reed, of Grand Rapids, Mich., owes her life to a garden rake. The little girl fell into a cistern while pl

ing with little Raymond Algra, a neighbor boy. The boy called his mother and told her Jennie was in the cistern. Mrs. Algra seized a garden rake, which had been left near by, and drew the child to safety. Jennie was delivered to her mother little worse for her cold plunge.

Prehistoric Race Relics Found in Nebraska.

Ruins left by some prehistoric race in the vicinity of Howe, Neb., have recently been inspected and studied by Professor Gerard Fowke, the St. Louis geologist, who is curator of the St. Louis Museum.

Mr. Fowke has been gathering scientific data of the primitive inhabitants of the Missouri Valley, and he investigated the remains of their civilization. He began with the ancient ruins north of Kansas City and followed the west bank of the river northward, tracing the northern retreat of these ancient farmers and gardeners.

After an exhaustive examination of the ruins found at Howe, Neb., and at Peru, the professor is of the opinion that the ancient remains recently discovered near White Cloud, Kan., were of works made by the same race. Considerable work has been done at Howe under the direction of C. L. Meek, and a large number of the bone and horn gardening instruments have been unearthed. The tools for the most part were found cached beneath what had once been the floors of the dwellings, where they were buried in beds of ashes.

Scientists are now of the belief that a number of the remains found along the Missouri River and the neighboring country were those of a civilization which preceded that of the Indians.

Skeletons discovered by Robert P. Gilder, of Omaha, and now in the University of Nebraska museum, are declared by scientists to greatly antedate the Indian. The skulls show much less brain capacity than those of the Indian, and have the very receding forehead characteristic of the early members of the race, and but little higher than the ape or gorilla type.

Well Stops Flowing at Night.

Hawkinsville, Ga., has a well which refuses to work at night. This well, which is located at the county jail, has an estimated flow of about fifty gallons of water per minute until about a year ago, when it suddenly and without apparent cause quit flowing entirely and remained dry until about a month ago, or just after the earthquake in Italy, when it commenced flowing again, the flow this time being not over two or three gallons per minute. But the strange thing about this well is that it flows only in daytime. It begins flowing about nine o'clock in the morning and quits about the same time in the evening, and remains dry all night.

Missing Police Pet is Found with Kittens.

"Now, Annie; now, Annie," crooned Captain of Detectives Walker on his knees at the central police station, in Cleveland, Ohio, "nobody's going to hurt 'em. Say, George, better give that teeny one some of that milk. It looks as if it needs some."

And Lieutenant George Matowitz, assisted by Lieutenant Charles Sterling, obeyed the commands of their superior, picked up a kitten in the corner, and administered nourishment via a bottle and nipple.

Annie, feline mascot of the police department, was discovered after a disappearance lasting four days. Hidden behind the telephone booths in the reporters' room at the central station, she was found nursing her litter of kittens.

The police department rejoiced, for Annie is the only official mascot at the station, and her disappearance had caused no small amount of worry among Cleveland's finest.

Captain Walker sent to the nearest drug store for a bottle and nipple and obtained a quart of milk, which was administered to all the little newcomers by Lieutenants Sterling and Matowitz, while Annie, secure in the grasp of Walker, arched her back and otherwise indicated her feline rage.

Villainous Bugs to Pose for the Movies.

Bugs in movies—ten or twenty-legged insects posing for the camera—are promised by a new entrant into the picture field, the division of entomology at the Minnesota College of Agriculture. The various creepers, borers, and aviators, after they have been placed on the film, will be routed over a circuit of Minnesota towns. The promoters of the venture are confident that their "star" bugs are sure to make a hit.

Only bold, dangerous villains, the most destructive known to exist in the State, are sure of a position in the cast. They are to be shown in the native environment, and all their destructive operations reproduced before those who suffer from their malicious activities.

Has a Lamb with Eight Legs.

Martin Werner, living near High Ridge, Mo., has a lamb which has eight legs. The lamb is otherwise normal. It is considered a remarkable curiosity by Mr. Werner's neighbors.

Heliograph to Sell Goods.

Perhaps the most novel of all methods of selling goods is that devised by a grocer in Tonasket, Wash., who uses the heliograph for signaling inquiries and quotations to a forest-service station located fifteen miles away across the mountains, and receives orders flashed back by the same method. The grocer's heliograph is an improvised instrument, consisting only of a mirror held in front of an automobile headlight. With this he flashes his messages in the code used by the forest service.

Electricity in a Fence Kills Three.

Three persons were killed and two badly shocked by current from a high-voltage wire which broke and fell across the rear fence of a house on Grover Street, Los Angeles, Cal. The 2,200 volts in the wire set fire to the fence across which it fell. Two men were killed when they threw buckets of water on the flames. A woman seized her husband's hand and fell dead.

War Chiefs Begin by Prayer.

Lord Curzon's statement in the House of Lords that Lord Roberts had conducted family prayers for his household for fifty years, is supplemented by data collected by the *Church Family Newspaper* regarding Lord Fisher, first sea lord, and Lord Kitchener.

"We learn, on unimpeachable authority," says the jour-

nal, "that Lord Fisher makes a habit of going to a certain church practically every day for prayer and meditation before commencing his responsible duties.

"We understand that Lord Kitchener follows out a similar rule whenever he is in London."

"Tipperary" Causes Mix-up of Nations.

Allan McAtee, Scotch, of Bridgeport, Ohio, asked two Austrian girls to give ear while he sang "Tipperary."

He was interrupted by Policeman Tom Howley, formerly of County Donegal, Ireland, who arrested him for disorderly conduct.

Next morning McAtee faced Mayor Herman A. Schafer, German by right of descent, who fined McAtee one dollar.

Harry Wilson, an American and a friend of McAtee's, paid the fine.

Fuel Value of Wood.

The fuel value of wood is in weight about half that of coal. But the forest-service laboratory at Washington has determined that a cord of seasoned hickory, oak, beech, birch, hard maple, ash, elm, locust, longleaf pine, or cherry equals a ton of coal; a cord and a half of shortleaf pine, hemlock, red gum, Douglas fir, sycamore, or soft maple, and two cords of cedar, redwood, poplar, catalpa, Norway pine, cypress, brasswood, spruce, or white pine are needed to equal in heat a ton of coal.

Eighteen Pigs Young Sow's Record.

Lawrence Murphy, of Pilot Knob, Ind., has a big-boned Poland China sow that had a litter of eighteen pigs. Believing this number more than the sow could care for, Murphy took five of the pigs away to raise by hand, but in this he was unsuccessful.

The sow at present has only ten pigs, she having laid on three of them at time of birth. The sow weighs 350 pounds and is not yet two years old. Her record is nine pigs in her first litter and eighteen in her second, which is considered quite extraordinary.

Serves as Juror at Eighty-five Years.

A. R. Wright, who is serving as a juror at this term of district court in Fort Dodge, Iowa, despite his eighty-five years, is probably the oldest man that ever has served on a jury in Iowa. Notwithstanding his advanced years, Mr. Wright is in possession of all of his faculties.

He saw a dispatch in a local paper recently about a man seventy-eight years of age who served on a jury, and he decided to go him one better.

Boa Tries to Eat Zoo.

Ten pythons, a crate of parrakeets, now reposing inside the largest of the giant snakes; armadillos, boa constrictors, monkeys, parrots, Theodora, a baby bear; Brazilian wild cats and South American birds of all combinations of brilliant colors were part of the cargo of the Lamport & Holt liner *Terence*, which docked in New York recently.

In spite of the varied temperaments of the members of the party, the trip was calm and peaceful, except for one dary day, when "Old Tom," the largest python, broke loose and devoured a crate of parrakeets to appease the appetite engendered by the sea breezes. Tom fell asleep while digesting the crate, however, and was bundled back into captivity before he awoke.

The zoological consignment is the property of Henry Bartels, of 72 Cortlandt Street, and was shipped to him by his brother Ferdinand, who has been collecting beasts and birds in the Amazon region to fill the hole in the wild-animal trade left when Hagenbeck was put out of business by the war.

Countess Szechenyi Invents War Game.

Countess Szechenyi, who was Miss Gladys Vanderbilt, of New York, and Countess Sigray, daughter of the late Marcus Daly, have invented a popular war game for Budapest. It arose from an argument between the two, as each has a pet theory as to when the war will end. The game consists of writing forecasts of the date of the close of the struggle, sealing them in envelopes, and filing them to be read after peace is declared. A growing number of people, lured by the chance of saying, "I told you so," are canning their own opinion with red wax and ceremony.

Dog Saves Man from Attack by a Park Buffalo.

James Crowley, keeper of the menagerie in Central Park, New York, who has charge of the herd of buffaloes and bears in the pens near the Arsenal, had a narrow escape from injury, when one of the biggest buffalos of the herd attacked him. Crowley's pet Airedale terrier rushed at the big buffalo and kept the animal busy long enough to let Crowley escape. The dog then made a dash for safety and managed to get out of the pen.

Crowley went to the buffalo pen just when his animal charges were enjoying breakfast. In the pen he was surprised to find the body of an old pet rooster, "Dick," evidently a victim of a snow storm. "Black Diamond," who is the fighter of the herd of buffalos and about the biggest of the lot, was not so much interested in his breakfast that he did not see Crowley, and when the latter's back was turned, he sneaked up behind him.

It would have fared badly for Crowley, for the buffalo was coming at full speed, with head lowered when the dog interfered and attacked the animal. Crowley then saw his danger and escaped before the buffalo could get free from the dog, and in a few minutes more the dog, knowing that danger to his master was past, came racing to safety out of the pen.

Sings as Convicts Weep.

Mrs. Mary Greer McLane, daughter of Bishop Greer, of New York, sang Easter hymns recently for the prisoners in Sing Sing prison. With her sister and father she entered the chapel of the prison, where every bench was filled. Her audience listened in absolute silence. When she had finished, more than one gray sleeve was used as a handkerchief.

Bishop Greer conducted the Episcopal services, and Mgr. Evers, of New York, and Father Cashin the Roman Catholic services.

His First Ride Proves Fatal.

Upon the very first ride on the motor cycle for which he had been saving for years, Samuel Leechman, twenty-six years old, a salesman, of New York, was killed before he had gone fourteen blocks.

On Central Park West he swerved at Seventy-ninth Street to avoid a passenger from a trolley car. The wheels skidded and Leechman was thrown. The police could get no ambulance for half an hour, and then Leechman was dead.

Friends say motor cycling had always been Leechman's hobby, but he had not been able to purchase one until the day of his death.

Hog Nearly Eight Feet Long.

A hog weighing 1,210 pounds and less than two years old is the record in swine raising made by Colonel W. E. Wimpey, of De Kalb County, Ga. The hog is 7 feet 10 inches long, 39½ inches high, and 74½ inches around the body.

Cupid Calls Mayor to Aid of Pastor.

Backed up with a letter of commendation from the Bishop of Ontaria and kind words from other persons of prominence, a clergyman of the Church of England, from Barrie, Canada, has asked Mayor Mitchel, of New York City, to find him a wife.

When the mayor replied he had no means of obtaining wives, but would be glad to publish his letter, the minister sent the following:

"DEAR SIR: This is to thank you for kindly acceding to my request to aid me in finding a wife, and you may publish my want. I desire a well-bred, cultured woman, healthy, cheerful, preferably not over thirty years of age. For publication let me repeat that I am an Episcopalian minister, graduate of a leading university, healthy, vigorous, bright, artistic, practical, affectionate, and very devoted where deserved.

"I send you credentials that will enable you to attest my position and social standing.

"Of course, all communications will be honorably treated by me as strictly confidential."

In his letter, which was inclosed, the bishop wrote:

"He is in good health, very active, full of pluck and energy. He could be designated as a manly man. He is about thirty years old, and has no ties."

A letter from M. L. Mackenzie King, director of the Rockefeller Foundation for Investigation of Industrial Relations in Ottawa, to the clergyman, which he sent to the mayor, said that Mr. King had received "an exceedingly kind and generous letter" on the clergyman's behalf from her royal highness, the Princess Frederica, of Brunswick and Lunenburg, which letter was written "by her royal highness in her own hand."

Barrie is a town of 5,500 people, with several manufacturing establishments and other industries, about sixty-four miles northwest of Toronto. It is the county seat of Simcoe County.

Any woman desiring to communicate with the clergyman on matrimony may address him at Post-office Box 701, Barrie, Ont.

Ate All the Rolls in Sight—Three.

The most striking effect of the eight months of war on Vienna has been the banishment of the roll which has made the Austrian capital famous. The Café Imperial on rare occasions with late coffee still serves white rolls. The other evening three were brought to a party of six, just as the party was finishing the meal, and an American girl, who came late, ate all three. The waiter's voice was full of real pathos as he pointed out the girl to the manager and said: "That, sir, is the fraülein who has eaten three of our rolls. I can't understand how she dared." No other hotel serves anything but gray war bread, and the signing of peace is spoken of as the day of the restoration of the Vienna roll.

Fireman with a Tough Head.

Three thousand New Yorkers gasped when an iron shutter fell three stories, striking a fireman squarely on the head. Two minutes later an ambulance corps couldn't find a fireman who would admit his head had been bruised.

Has Fireproof Cotton Press.

J. R. Roddie, a negro, of Muskogee, Okla., has invented and obtained a patent upon an all-steel and fireproof cotton press. Not only does the new press obviate the danger of fire, but the claim is made for it that it can be operated by one man, whereas the present cotton presses require two and three men to operate, and that it can be built for one-half the cost of the presses now in use.

Offered Fifteen Cents to Settle.

An unidentified autoist, after running into a rig driven by Mrs. Frank Reynolds, Mount Holly, N. J., and tossing her and the horse several feet into a ditch along the roadside, stopped his car, turned around, and offered to settle the affair by paying her fifteen cents for a broken strap on the horse's harness. She refused to accept his offer.

Mrs. Reynolds is a large woman, and received a jolting from which she will not recover for several days. No bones were broken. The horse was severely injured. Mrs. Reynolds secured the number of the machine, and will sue the driver for damages.

Rye Bread Fad Lifts German Flour Ban.

Some of the restrictions against the use of wheat flour in Germany for making bread and pastry have been removed, says a dispatch from Amsterdam. This step has been taken because of the increased consumption of rye bread, which resulted in the use of an undue proportion of that grain rather than wheat.

Lone, Timid Prisoner Released on Parole.

Elwood Armstrong, the sole prisoner in the Sussex County Jail, in Georgetown, Del., who recently complained to Sheriff Jacob West that he was lonely and afraid to remain in the prison at night without company, will no longer be afraid.

Recently he was paroled for two years to Charles S. Richards, of Georgetown, formerly secretary of state, and brother of Robert H. Richards, of Wilmington, formerly attorney general. This was done after he had confessed to the theft of five dozen eggs.

Accordingly the jail is now empty. The turnkey has taken a vacation, and the sheriff does not have enough to do to keep him busy.

Chickens are roosting in the cells, some of which are modern steel affairs, and the jail yard will soon be planted in early corn.

The dry forces say it is a concrete example of what happens when the liquor traffic is forbidden. This is a local-option section.

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STREET & SMITH, Publishers, 79-89 Seventh Ave., NEW YORK CITY